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**CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST
THE SON OF MAN**



CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF MAN

By **WILLIAM CLEAVER WILKINSON**

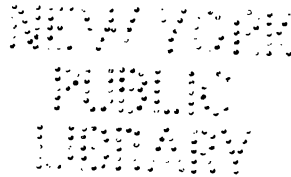
Author of

“Concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God,” “Paul and the Revolt Against Him,”
“The Epic of Saul,” “The Epic of Paul,” “The Epic of Moses,” “Some
New Literary Valuations,” “Daniel Webster: A Vindication,” etc.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,
and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

“The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to
minister and to give his life a ransom for many.”



PHILADELPHIA

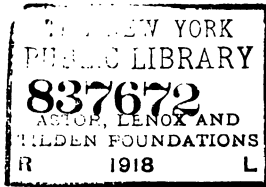
THE GRIFFITH AND ROWLAND PRESS

BOSTON
LOS ANGELES

CHICAGO
KANSAS CITY

ST. LOUIS
TORONTO

NEW YORK
WINNIPEG



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Published July, 1918

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*O Thou, to whom the imperial spirit of Paul
Bowed down in worship as to God Most High,
Forefend that in fatuity I try
To find for Thee some finite measure! All
Endeavors of comparison must fall
Futile in presence of infinity.
What human greatness then so great that I,
By saying that Thou art greater, should extol
Thee worthily? Yet, is it true that Thou
Wert infinite? For Thou wert human; yea,
Didst to the burden of our sorrows bow;
Obedient unto death becoming, lay
Thy meek head in the sepulcher! Whom now,
Thence risen, all ages and all worlds obey!*

TO

My Wife

WHOSE COLLABORATION WITH ME
IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS BOOK
I HAVE HIGHLY VALUED,
I DEDICATE THE FINISHED RESULT—
GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY TESTIFYING
THAT HER FAITHFUL CRITICISM,
AT ONCE SYMPATHETIC AND UNSPARING,
HAS CONTRIBUTED MATERIALLY
TO MAKE IT LESS UNWORTHY
THAN IT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN

William Leaven Wilkins

PREFACE

THIS book is not a *Life* of Jesus Christ. No such *Life* has ever been written, or ever can be. For a proper "Life of Jesus Christ," "sources" are lacking.

But "sources" are not lacking, they are richly supplied, for furnishing forth a work like the present, which may very fairly be described as a cycle of *memorabilia* concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. It presents Jesus Christ moving, so to speak visualized, in speech and in action, as a Man among men.

As a Man *above* men? If so, that cannot be helped. Let but the facts be represented truly, the resultant effect is inevitable. The transcendency of this unique human personality is as unmistakable as is the humanity itself which is transcended. The transcendency does not need to be insisted upon. It does its own insisting in being truly and simply presented.

One newspaper critic of the present author's previous work, "Concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God," remarked—discerningly, at least, whether or not overgenerously—"The *apologetic value* of the book is immense." In that former case, the "apologetic value," whatever the measure of it may be held to be, was due to argument. The author himself, in finding and in conducting his argument, felt indeed, he must acknowledge, the convincing force of it to be nothing less than literally "immense."

In the present work (if the final chapters be excepted) there is almost no argument at all. Yet I have felt, throughout the whole delightful labor of producing it, the "apologetic value" of the mere narrative, of which the book mainly consists, to be overwhelming, irresistible, omnipotent.

The two books, "Concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God" and "Concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of Man," belong together, and they are best read in the given order of priority. They are, mutually, complements of each other.

"In Him was life, and the Life was the light of men."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is now a topic of the most living, even anxious, interest to all Christians; who often, in current discussions of the subject, see this, the very keystone of their faith and hope, wrought at by hostile hands (hands found strangely within their own ranks sometimes, ostensibly within them)—wrought at with an energy and with a subtlety such as have never been equaled in this use before, for the purpose of dislodging it, or at least with the result of tending to dislodge it, from the place in which Jesus fixed it and Paul fixed it, there to bind fast forever the arch of Christian truth, and the arch of human salvation effected through the glorious gospel of the grace of God. I felt that I could not properly seem to be unaware of the ruin thus threatened to the well-being of the church and of the world. I have therefore not only rehearsed with all confidence the narratives of Scripture relating to the resurrection of Christ, but, candidly and carefully study-

ing them in the light of searching historical criticism, attempted to exhibit their unassailable trustworthiness.

The editor of a certain important weekly religious newspaper, a sincerely orthodox evangelical Christian gentleman, was taken to task a few years ago for expressing in his columns a sentiment, apropos of "Easter," which I shall not, I think, misrepresent by giving it a form of words like this: 'If we could only believe, without a waver of doubt, that Christ did really rise from the dead!' A brother religious editor, an "esteemed contemporary" of his, rebuked him for so much confession of faltering faith—that brother being himself perhaps either less sensitively conscious of the great venture of faith involved, or less frank to disclose his intimate feeling, than was the editor he criticized.

For my own part, I have to acknowledge that I feel the necessity of recurring again and again to the "many infallible proofs" (prime among which for me will always be the apostle Paul), in order to keep my own assurance stedfast and serene. I gladly and gratefully testify here that the fresh study of the life of Christ, especially of the part of it subsequent to his crucifixion, which was necessary in preparation for the production of this book, has greatly refreshed and strengthened my faith—this, notwithstanding the fact, nay, but perhaps yet more because of the fact, that I have thus been brought much into contact (to feel its demonstrable futility) with destructive historical criticism doing its best, that is, its worst, dealing with the subject.

It is not unlikely that the attitude of mind confessed by that religious editor rebuked, is the attitude, not

confessed, of many thoughtful Christians at the present time. I shall hope that the perusal of this book, conducted as a survey and review of the evidence bearing on the case, may prove tonic and helpful to Christians become thus half-wavering believers in the resurrection of their Lord. Let not such at the end say, sighing, 'Alas, that it should be so much easier to prove it than it is to believe it!' Far rather, let them, in those touching words of the afflicted father of Mark's Gospel, say, praying, "I believe; help thou my unbelief!"

NOTE. It is proper to say that in the preparation of this work, free use has, with the courteous permission, herewith gratefully acknowledged, of the Henry O. Shepard Company, of Chicago, been made of a partial sketch (carefully revised) of a life of Jesus, contributed by me to a collective volume produced some time ago by that house, under the title, "The People's Bible History." W. C. W.

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CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF MAN

I

ECCE HOMO

FOUR years before the beginning of the Christian era there was born obscurely in the East a babe who, within thirty-three years of his birth, grew to be indisputably the greatest man that the world has ever seen.

This man was the greatest of warriors, though he never drew a sword. He was the greatest of conquerors, though he never fought a battle. He was the greatest of kings, though he never occupied a throne. He was the greatest of legislators, though men never appointed him to the legislator's office. He was the greatest of statesmen, though he never sat in a cabinet. He was the greatest of philosophers, though he never named the name philosophy. He was the greatest of teachers; he was the greatest of preachers.

He was the greatest of reformers, though he never urged what would be called a reform. He was the greatest among leaders of thought, though he was not what would be called a Thinker. He was the greatest force in literature, though he never wrote a book. He was the greatest promoter of scholarship, though he was not what would be called a scholar. He was the greatest promoter of science, though he was not what would be called a scientist.

This man put forth such pretensions for himself of right to dominion over others as no one else ever put forth, yet he was the meekest of men. He claimed such ownership of all things as no one else ever did, yet he denied himself and sacrificed himself beyond any example or parallel.

He was the greatest of saints, for he never committed a sin. He was the greatest of sufferers, for he bore the sins of the world.

This man's name was Jesus, and he had no other name. Others had borne the name before him. Others bore the name after him. But he is the man always meant when any one speaks of Jesus. Many men have lived who have been called "sons of God." One man alone has borne the name, "The Son of God." "Sons of men" is a not uncommon turn of expression to mean individuals of the human race. Only one individual of the human race has come to be known as "The Son of Man."

This is an appellation which Jesus applied to himself. Nobody else in the New Testament appears applying that appellation to Jesus. After the fashion, so much the vogue now, of "research" work conducted in historical study and historical writing, New Testament scholars and critics have ransacked literature to learn from what source Jesus drew for his appellation of himself, "The Son of Man." As if there needs must be some originator of the title apart from himself! "Son of Man" was an expression easily found. Ezekiel, for example, has it some ninety times or more; "son of man" is the form of words in which that prophet is himself pre-vaillingly addressed in the text of the book of his prophecy. "*The Son of Man*" is Christ's own title for himself. No research in the matter is called for outside of the New Testament.

It is impossible not to feel a solemn, a pathetic, significance, and a pregnant significance as well, in the appel-

lation thus chosen by Jesus for himself. It seems to be as it were a reminder to himself, and at the same time an announcement to others, that he had become in a peculiar, a unique, sense, emphatically, by eminence, human; that he had abdicated a preexistent glory and humbled himself visibly to man's degree. Intimately, comprehensively, supremely, sublimely—and pathetically—human, THE SON OF MAN!

II

WHY ANOTHER LIFE OF JESUS?

TO the question, a very natural one, raised in the title to this chapter, it may be truly replied that the present work is in fact not "Another Life of Jesus," but instead simply a series of narrative sketches concerning that Life.

All that is known, all that can be known, of Jesus Christ is contained in a book which is already in everybody's hands. All is therein told, better than I, better than any one, could hope to tell it again.

Why, then, any sketches even of the life of Jesus other than those supplied in the Gospels?

That very word, "Gospels," may be taken to suggest reasons why. It is in the plural number. It is Gospels, not Gospel. The Bible itself contains four different biographic accounts of Jesus.

One of these four accounts, that of Luke, begins by saying:

"Forasmuch as *many* have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

So it seems that there were early produced not merely the four Gospels which we now have, but a great number of attempted lives of Jesus. "Lives of Jesus," I say, for substantially such must have been the "declara-

tions" alluded to by Luke—that being substantially the character of Luke's own "declaration," as well as the character of those of his fellow evangelists.

There was thus from the first a wish to write, and a wish to read, on this subject. That wish, or rather those two wishes, have continued to this day. There have been a great many "lives" of Jesus written, and in many different languages. Meantime, how striking is the perennial, the everlasting, the unwasting, freshness, as of modernness contemporaneous over and over again with every succeeding age, which lives and blooms like perpetual spring in the Gospels themselves! Our successive rewritings of those immortal books serve their momentary purpose and pass away. The original Gospels survive all changes of literary fashion and of literary taste. So far from growing obsolete, so far from being superseded, they take on, with every decay of the books made from them, a new and ever-lengthening lease of youth and immortality. They are God's written testimonies concerning Jesus; and, like "the most ancient heavens" themselves, out from which God thrice spoke with an audible voice in attestation of his beloved Son, those written testimonies from age to age continue "fresh and strong."

In our opening chapter, the chapter preceding this, some strong things were said concerning the comparative greatness of Jesus among men. But strong as those things were, they fell short of being strong enough. Indeed it would be difficult to match with language the extraordinary state of the facts. Jesus has laid his hand on the course of human events to a degree of influence which no statement could exaggerate. For instance, there is hardly a book among the uncounted millions on millions of books published since the invention of printing, that does not bear marks of the influence of Jesus. This is true of books of science even. Nay, it is true of books written by men who

would profess themselves deniers of the claims of Jesus. Such men do not escape, they cannot escape, the influence which they resist, or which they disown. Their books at least bear a date, and that date testifies—what? Why, that so many years ago Jesus was born. You cannot date a letter, you cannot date a business document, without silently thus confessing the influence of Jesus. They used to have in Russia a plan—a plan of course to be no longer carried out, under the new order presently, we hope, to be established there—of supervising the newspaper and periodical press. An American or an English journal or magazine, if it happened to contain something judged by the responsible officer to be prejudicial to the government of the Czar, was not permitted to go to the person for whom it was designed until first the objectionable matter was so blotted out that it could not be read. If the combination of letters, C-h-r-i-s-t, wherever it occurs in any books, were treated in a similar manner, most of the books written in Christendom (note that word!) since the Christian era would be disfigured with the censor's blot, while large numbers of them would be ruined.

The foregoing remarks are but a single line of illustration going to show how inextricably inwoven is the influence of Jesus in the web and tissue of history. It cannot but be that nineteen centuries of history so illuminated everywhere with the name and image of Jesus, will help us arrive at a better knowledge than before was possible, of what Jesus taught, and did, and was. We certainly ought to be able to study his life somewhat more wisely than any generation of our forefathers.

The original records of the life of Jesus which survive concern themselves almost exclusively with, first, the circumstances of his birth and his infancy, and, secondly, the crowded and eventful last few months, perhaps three years or so, of his life. Alike the one and the

other of the two portions of the history, the beginning and the ending of Christ's life on earth, are full of the deepest interest, and happily they are both of them treated in the Gospels with a good degree of circumstance and detail. While, therefore, as I have said, it would be impossible for any one to write what could properly be called a "Life" of Jesus, it is quite possible to write "concerning" him a series of biographic sketches, a group of *memorabilia*, which should go far toward satisfying our utmost reasonable desires. To accomplish this is the undertaking, arduous indeed, but not impracticable, which I have set before myself in the writing of the present book.

Superficially regarded, the Gospel records constitute a story of marvels. More profoundly regarded, the marvels cease to be marvels, and become the perfectly natural, as it were inevitable, incidents and events in the career of a Being such as Jesus was—and is. It is a very remarkable characteristic of the New Testament story of marvels, that the marvels are related with a singular absence of marvel on the part of the writers who relate them. This is exactly as quasi-logically it should be. Let us therefore, writer and reader alike, deal with the narrative we are studying in a manner as far as possible like the manner in which the New Testament tells it. There should, accordingly, be no effort on our part to ignore, or even to minimize, the element of the supernatural, so-called, present everywhere in the beautiful, the glorious, story—much less effort "scientifically" to explain it away.

The one most striking, most startling, most staggering, encounter of the supernatural arrests and commands our attention at once on the very threshold of our undertaking. The wonderful Being, that supreme paradox of human history, Immanuel, God with us, could not, and he did not, enter our world, and become a true, organic, incorporate, member of our human race—it

was impossible that he should become incarnate here—in the ordinary way of conception and birth. He could not be, as in order to be an effectual Saviour it was necessary that he should be, at once God and man, without such a solemn, sublime manner of entrance among us as is, with incomparable frankness, incomparably blended with incomparable delicacy, narrated and described in the two Gospels of Matthew and of Luke.

III

THE ANNUNCIATION

THE circumstances of the birth of Jesus were remarkable, fitly resembling, in this respect, the circumstances of his career in life, as also those of the long sequel (yet unfinished) that has been unfolded in posthumous history. Some of the remarkable circumstances of his birth immediately attended that event; but some preceded it. We are to deal in this chapter with those that preceded it.

One of those precedent circumstances occurred partly in heaven. For an angel—his name is given—it was Gabriel—was despatched from heaven by God on an earthly errand closely connected with that extraordinary human birth which was then soon to take place. The destination appointed to this angel was perfectly definite and particular. He was to go to a country named, to a city named, and to a person named. The person named was a woman, presumably a young woman; unmarried, and a virgin. It was Mary. There had been Marys before; there have been Marys since; but what the angel told that Mary that day would, when fulfilled, result in making her incomparably the most illustrious of all the illustrious women that ever have borne her beautiful name. The city in which Mary lived, and to which, therefore, the angel Gabriel was sent, was Nazareth, in the province of Galilee, a country of Palestine.

“The angel coming in to her said.” Such are the simple words which tell all that we know of the time, and of the manner, of the angel’s coming. In what appearance he presented himself, we know not. Whether by day or by night, we know not. But we know what

he said. He said: "Hail, highly favored! The Lord is with thee." How simple, how courteous, how reassuring! We feel like applying Milton's epithet, and calling Gabriel "the affable archangel." But Mary was troubled at the greeting of this visitor—gracious, nay, even deferential, as it was. And one cannot wonder. For, however the celestial messenger might veil his glory and accommodate himself to the character and the state of the young Galilean maiden, however sincerely respectful he might seek to be, and be, still there was something that could not but startle in such an apparition.

Mary pondered; but she did not speak. The angel saw her trepidation, and he addressed himself to that. "Fear not, Mary," he said. That familiar name! Her own from earliest recollection, how the sound of it must have calmed her! And his gentle, "Fear not!" Then he went on and said: "For thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

What an august announcement, with what exquisite simplicity and dignity conveyed! We do not naturally think of politeness, of courtesy, of complaisance, as a trait or characteristic of the Supreme Being. But may we not—must we not—if we think deeply and truly, think of this message from God to Mary, brought by an angel and by that angel delivered so beautifully—must we not think of it as an act, on God's part, of divinely considerate politeness? God might have made this chosen woman, Mary, the mother of his Son without apprising her beforehand of the unique honor to which she was elected. But he would prepare her for the things that were to be. He might have done this by

sending her a vision or a dream. That way he had sometimes taken, when he wished to communicate a purpose of his to a selected one among the children of men. He would, as we shall soon see, take this way again in the case of a man to whom Mary was very nearly related.

But a dream sent to Mary would not do her the honor, the high and open honor, that he wished to bestow on the elected mother of his Son. God would have Mary herself know, and he would have his angels also know, that she was one who, for his own sake doubtless, and for the sake of her Son to be, still more than for her sake, the King of heaven delighted to honor. He would send an angel, not a dream, to be his messenger to her. The angel was perhaps even an archangel. There may have been yet another reason for the divine forewarning to Mary. In the case of a heart so pure as hers, some previous consciousness of her high vocation to such motherhood would serve to ennoble her character, and so to qualify her better for her future part, by feeding her mind with solemn thoughts during the period that was to intervene before her child was born.

Mary's behavior was just that lovely blending of docility, of faith, and of maidenly modesty, which one sees now to be most fit in a woman chosen to such a destiny. She spoke to the angel. Her instinctive, irrepressible, maidenly scruples overcame in her all lingering fear; as also apparently for the moment they quite effaced from her mind all thought of the unparalleled privilege and distinction conferred upon her. She said: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

Now, Mary, though still unmarried, was already betrothed. This meant, according to the manners of her place and her age, that she, by a public ceremony, which, though not marriage, was as sacred as marriage, had bound herself to be in due time the wife of a certain

man; who, in his turn, having given a reciprocal pledge, regarded himself, and was regarded by his neighbors, in much the same light as if he were already her husband. There must, then, have glanced through the mind of this bride to be, a thought of her affianced, one apparently as stainless in character as she was herself. But whether or not Mary thought at this moment of Joseph, she said only what we have already seen. The angel, as if he revered in Mary the motive that prompted her question, answered it with a majesty of simplicity befitting his own celestial rank; befitting likewise the august, the awful, purport of what he had to say: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. For no word from God shall be void of power."

Mary's manner of receiving this communication from the angel was the perfection of what was fit and felicitous. The chief mark of it was humility, which consists in absolute, instant obedience. Making no protestations of her own unworthiness to be singled out from among women for an honor so inconceivably great, she simply said: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

"And the angel departed from her," is the simple conclusion of the narrative given of this marvelous and marvelously beautiful incident.

IV

MARY'S VISIT TO ELIZABETH

MARY had accepted her vocation with a composure inimitably serene, a composure which could have had but one spring, namely, such limpid obedience as hers. But the name of her cousin Elizabeth pronounced by an angel from heaven in communication of such tidings concerning her, stirred the placidity of her spirit with an eagerness of sympathy, perhaps of chastened curiosity, that she could not resist. She must see that cousin Elizabeth and see her at once. What a charming touch of nature was here! With no further delay, we may suppose, than was needful, Mary started for the hill-country of Judea, where her kinswoman lived. She journeyed "with haste." Her heart went before her, beating quick with desire to be there. She found the house of Zachariah; she went in and saluted Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was perhaps alone in the room where her visitor found her; but did more than she herself hear the salutation of Mary? Elizabeth was soon to become a mother, and her unborn babe leaped within her at the sound of Mary's voice. That babe was John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. Are we to understand that his unconscious instinct prophetic told him even then, thrilling with joy his generous heart, that the mother of his Lord was nigh? (It was very noteworthy said by the angel Gabriel to Zachariah that his son John "should be filled with the Holy Spirit, *even from his mother's womb.*") Perhaps not. Perhaps it was only that the poet mother-heart in Elizabeth, transposing the emotion, so construed an experience of her own, due to an upspringing within her of sacred, sympathetic joy.

Elizabeth was now filled with the Holy Spirit, and she responded to Mary's salutation with words wiser and higher than she could herself, even with premeditation, have framed. She raised her voice in speaking, so much we know; and we can imagine that it was with a kind of triumphal chant that she spoke. The process of translation cannot destroy the noble rhythm of the language: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? For behold, when the voice of thy salutation came into my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord."

It is to be observed that in this meeting and greeting Elizabeth appears remarkably beforehand with Mary; and it must have been to Mary most gratefully reassuring—if there was indeed, as well there may have been, some little fluttering in her heart of doubt and question as to the reality of what she had experienced—to have Elizabeth so salute her with anticipative recognition of the sublime and awful truth of her vocation to be the mother of her cousin Elizabeth's "Lord." No wonder that Mary then was elated and inspired to break forth as she did in her "*Magnificat*"—that famous psalm of praise and rejoicing recited by her, of which need be quoted here only the opening strophe:

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
 For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaiden:
 For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me
 blessed.
 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;
 And holy is his name.

The sudden access of inspiration which gave rise to that exchange of Hebrew psalmody between Mary

and Elizabeth may well have surprised both the two expectant mothers.

It deserves to be noted in passing that Elizabeth had performed a signal act of obeisance to Mary, in addressing her as she did. Elizabeth was a woman advanced in years, while Mary, as we may assume, though this we do not know, was in the bloom of her youth. When it is considered what respect to age was observed and enforced among the Jews, it appears very striking that Elizabeth should at once have deferred, with such a grace of humility, to her youthful kinswoman. The deference paid was to Mary as mother of Elizabeth's Lord. One remembers that deep saying of the apostle Paul, "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." That qualification Elizabeth then had; for on the present occasion she was "filled with the Holy Spirit." This Luke expressly tells us.

Mary remained as guest with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home in Nazareth. It would be an idyll of sweet and holy home life such as was never yet written, if we could have, in the style of narrative and description found nowhere except in the Bible, the story and picture of those rural three months of communication between Elizabeth and Mary. We must content ourselves with only that first scene of it already presented; for only so much is given us in the accounts of the Evangelists.

Of one thing we may be quite sure. The chief topic of the mutual talk between the cousins was the wonderful coincidence—coincidence and contrast both at once—in their several experiences as miraculous mothers to be. It could not but have been, to each one of the two, a most strengthening and comforting reassurance as to the solid reality of her own solemn, peculiar vocation from God. Human nature is in its basis one and the same, from age to age, and from race to race, of men. We need not for one moment imagine those Hebrew women to have been

free from the occasional invasion of doubts and misgivings. We may be sure they sometimes asked themselves whether, after all, they were not, in their extraordinary experiences, the subject of mistake and delusion. Especially did Mary need the most abundant support of her faith and her obedience, to sustain her through that peculiarly trying ordeal of silent months which she saw herself appointed to undergo. It was divine wisdom, shown in divine complaisance, that word from the angel to Mary about Mary's kinswoman Elizabeth. It would be impossible to conceive an expedient, short of continued immediate miraculous intervention from God, better adapted to furnish to Mary the needed confirmation of her faith, and, besides that, chance of the secret delicate sympathy needed, than was the expedient actually employed, namely, that announcement to her of Elizabeth's condition, kindred, yet contrasted, to her own.

Traits like these in the New Testament narrative put it at immeasurable remove from the possibility of its being supposed the invention of the imagination of men. The spirit of myth would have multiplied miracle. The spirit of truth limited miracle to the actual fact. And it was according to a principle which God seems always to observe—the principle of strict parsimony, forbidding needless display of the supernatural—that Mary should thus have been left, as she was, to the perfectly natural resource of drawing sympathy and support from her kinswoman, Elizabeth. That resource was sufficient—made sufficient by the simple fact of Mary's having received her first and her only intelligence of Elizabeth's condition from the lips of an angel.

Both the annunciation and the salutation thus described have furnished subjects for painters. The highest artistic genius and skill have found their opportunity in representing on canvas to the eye, the imagined persons, postures, and environments of these exquisite Scripture stories. Because artists have some-

times chosen, from the Bible and from church history, such subjects for treatment with the brush, as, for instance, the Crucifixion, the Descent from the Cross, the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, it has been said that the influence of Christianity has debased art, by substituting haggard, emaciated figures for the blooming and graceful forms, "gods and godlike men," which were the ideals of antique pagan painting and sculpture. But certainly never did subjects inherently more fit and inspiring tempt the imagination and the hand of the artist than are supplied in the Annunciation, and in the Salutation of Elizabeth. For proof of this, if any were needed, may witness the pictures actually produced on these subjects.

V

THE BIRTH

THERE came a time, we know not exactly at what point in the course of the history, when Joseph had to learn, from some source, the condition and the expectation of his betrothed. How he first learned it, we can only conjecture. But when he did learn it—perhaps in the first instance from his own observation of her personal appearance on her return after her three months' visit to her cousin Elizabeth—Joseph purposed and planned in his thought to put Mary away from him—that is, cancel the betrothal, and not marry her. It was the impulse of a man who looked out for his own blameless repute.

Now, Joseph could proceed in either one of two ways. One way would expose Mary to open shame; the other would, as far as possible, shield from the public eye her apparent fault and misfortune. He chose the latter way. But before he took the step that would be decisive, God intervened. Joseph had a dream in which an angel of the Lord appeared to him. The angel is not named. Perhaps it was an undistinguished one among the innumerable heavenly host of those that wait on God to do his pleasure. This angel, speaking to Joseph, called him by name, with significant allusion accompanying to Joseph's rightful place in the royal line of Judah. He said: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." Joseph was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, and Mary was brought under

the grateful shelter of acknowledged relationship to a husband. She, in that sacred privacy, accomplished the months of her patience and her hope.

But when now her time drew nigh, behold, a surprising coincidence of history. Galilean as Mary was, and Nazarene, she must yet bear her miraculous child, not at Nazareth, and not in Galilee, but in Bethlehem of Judea. This place of nativity for the Christ of God had been long before announced. No miracle was resorted to for bringing the necessary fulfilment of prophecy about; a certain very subordinate, seemingly negligible, incident in what appeared to be (although in truth it was not) the great main movement of human history, was easily made use of in the hand of divine Providence to effect this purpose of the divine will. The Roman emperor of the world, at exactly the meet moment, issued a decree which, without his meaning it or dreaming it, caused the birth of the Lord's Anointed to occur where ancient Hebrew prophecy had predicted that it would occur. A census of the Roman Empire ("all the world") was ordered.

In accordance with the wisely indulgent policy of the mighty despotism of Rome, the provinces of Palestine were permitted to set about obeying the imperial mandate in their own chosen ancestral way. The Jewish practice was for each family to report itself for registration at that city which, to the head of the family, was in a peculiar sense "his own." Now, to Joseph, he being of the house and lineage of David, that city was Bethlehem. To Bethlehem accordingly Joseph, with Mary, went. The distance from Nazareth to Bethlehem (some five miles south of Jerusalem) was about eighty miles. The journey would naturally occupy from four to six days. Arrived at Bethlehem, they tarried there, and there the hour came upon Mary and her babe was born.

The earthly life of Jesus, from the first of it to the last of it, was, like the manner of speech that he loved to use, full of paradoxes. Never in any other case was birth of babe into the world at once so magnificent and so mean, so illustrious and so obscure. The parents of Jesus—his reputed parents—were poor. We know this, not from the fact that Joseph was a worker in wood, or “carpenter,” as he is now customarily called. Such he might have been, though a man in easy circumstances. For it was a wholesome practice with the Jews to put their sons, whatever the standing and circumstances of the fathers, to the learning of a trade. Generally it would be the trade become hereditary in the family. But when, according to the law of Moses, Jesus, as a first-born child of his parents, was brought by them to the temple at Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord, the offering that accompanied was the one appointed for the poorest of the poor, “a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.”

Such was the parentage of Jesus. And at Bethlehem the quarters that Joseph and Mary occupied apparently corresponded. For the new-born babe, wrapped, as the custom was, in swathing bands, found his first resting-place in what is now called a “manger.” That name is not unfit; and still, unless we consider the customs of the time and the place, we shall perhaps form a mistaken idea of the situation. It was, in fact, a case of not unnatural adjustment to circumstances, such adjustment as is still practised in the same country by travelers. But with every relief thus thrown upon the character of the infant Saviour’s accommodation at Bethlehem, yet what a lowly birth was his! How few human births not absolutely abject and squalid in misery, have ever been lowlier! That is one side of it. But look at the other side.

In the region about Bethlehem, there were at that season—early spring, probably, and not winter—shepherds

staying out of doors, and so under the open sky, keeping their flocks by night. The flock that they tended was perhaps made up of sheep destined for sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem. These men were chosen to be recipients of a remarkable revelation from heaven. The choice of them was not, so far as we are told, due to any character of special worthiness in them to invite the choice. It seems, from all the indication given, to have been an exercise of the free, undeserved, electing grace of God. Their situation, indeed, at the moment, and their employment, were opportune. They were waking and were out of doors. They were thus ready to observe that which happened. An angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. The apparition appalled them. But the angel spoke reassuring words. He said: "Be not afraid; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger."

Following this announcement, and following it suddenly, there came a further celestial revelation. This time, ear as well as eye was filled and overpowered. There was no longer one angel, with one angelic voice; but, surrounding that messenger from on high who had already spoken, there hovered a multitude of the heavenly host who joined in a choral hymn of praise to God and of joyous proclamation to men, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men."

The heavenly vision and the heavenly voices passed, to those shepherds. But, simple men as of course they were, they were yet, it would appear, not altogether unworthy to have seen and heard what they did—for they believed. They said to one another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and"—not learn whether that voice

was, indeed, from heaven, and whether what it told was true, but—"see this thing that is come to pass." As they did not doubt, so they did not wait; and they did not loiter on the way. They went "with haste." And they were rewarded; for they found both Mary and Joseph, with the babe lying, as had been described to them, in the manger. Naturally, they then spread far and wide what had been said to them from heaven concerning the child; and naturally too, wonder sprang up everywhere with the spreading of the news. With many that heard, the wonder may have been short-lived; but as for Mary, she treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. Mary must have told this at least about herself, and that yields us an interesting hint of Mary as source of much intimate information about the deepest sacred secrets of beginning gospel history.

Such as has thus been shown is the New Testament story of the birth of Jesus. The story has here been told mainly as Luke tells it, who was not one of the disciples to whom Jesus promised inspiration. Luke may have been inspired, although he does not claim that he was, nor does any New Testament authority claim it for him. His companionship with the apostle Paul gives a virtual stamp of trustworthiness equivalent to inspiration, since Paul certainly was inspired, and since Luke enjoyed full opportunity of guidance in his work from Paul.

The thing noteworthy about Luke's account of the virgin birth of Jesus is that it was made up by the author through intelligent, painstaking, sifting investigation conducted by Luke, so he himself informs us, in a manner which we now recognize as entirely similar to the manner in which present-day historiographers proceed in producing their final results.

The story is of course manifestly a marvelous story. What attestation accredits it to us "moderns," beyond the authority of the non-apostolic Evangelist Luke, sup-

ported by the apostolic authority of the Evangelist Matthew? Readers living in the doubting and questioning atmosphere ambient everywhere about us to-day, readers especially to whom may have penetrated some effect from the conceit of "scientificism" which broadly and deeply affects the current age of the world—in short, present-day readers of whatever class will almost inevitably raise with themselves the question, 'How do we really know, how can we really know, that things connected with the birth of Jesus actually occurred as the New Testament represents?'

The New Testament, by the way, nowhere, save in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, makes any reference to what is now briefly spoken of as the question of the virgin birth. If there was truly, in the case of Jesus, the wonder of a virgin birth, why the silence of the New Testament in general about it, especially the silence of Mark and John? Most especially of all, the silence of the apostle John, so nearly related to Jesus, and by Jesus, as he hung dying on the cross, memorably made fostering son to the mother?

These are quite natural questions to be sincerely asked, by no means necessarily always in the spirit of captiously skeptical criticism. What answer is it possible in all candor to give?

In the first place, it must be recognized that, unless there be supposed a miraculous divine impartation of knowledge on the subject to Matthew and to Luke—a supposition not, by me at least, entertained as likely to be true—the story depends absolutely on the word of Joseph and of Mary. That fact at once suggests a very important consideration. The situation created was one of extraordinary delicacy and difficulty for the pair. They themselves, Joseph and Mary, might be completely convinced of the reality of what they alone had it in their power to relate; but how could others be convinced that Joseph and Mary were right in their be-

lief, that they were not the subjects and victims of an empty hallucination? Nay, even that they had not committed a moral lapse in conduct, which they were agreed together to cover up by a fabrication of story that no one could prove to be false? This idea of course no true Christian believer could for one moment admit to be possible, as no clear-thinking, logical, true Christian believer could admit to be possible any conceivable alternative idea in repudiation of the literal truth of the New Testament narrative. The sole logical recourse for the denier or disbeliever of the virgin birth is to cease trying to "interpret" the history, and simply reject the history altogether—thus leaving the life of Jesus Christ utterly bereft of any recorded beginning whatsoever. We should indeed still have the "beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ," to use Mark's expression, but no beginning of the life of Jesus Christ.

Obviously, in the very peculiar circumstances in which Joseph and Mary were involved, the safe and therefore the prudent course for them to adopt was absolute reticence—an attitude to be maintained until Providence should unmistakably indicate that their tongues might be loosed on the subject. I say "their"; but there is great probability that Joseph, the putative father of Jesus, had early finished his individual part in the history by death; so that the mother Mary would at length be left alone in custody of the high and holy, but embarrassing, secret entrusted to her, to be kept sacredly secret until—until when?

The point of time when can only be conjectured, and very doubtfully conjectured. Perhaps the mother's faith, pathetic faith! was shaken, was paralyzed, when her son was brought to that death of agony and shame—was crucified! At any rate, she was a woman, and her womanly quality and instinct would inevitably cause her to shrink from making disclosures to anybody then living. Her cousin Elizabeth, of great age already more

than thirty years before, had undoubtedly died; to whom could Mary now speak?

To whom indeed except to her fostering son, the apostle John? He would believe; and he would be a confidant to be trusted for the exercise of all necessary prudence in imparting Mary's disclosures to others. John perhaps, indeed I think we may say he probably, imparted them to his fellow apostle Matthew. It may be also to his fellow apostle Paul.

Thus is naturally accounted for the knowledge that enabled Matthew to tell his story of the birth of Jesus. Thus also is accounted for with great probability the knowledge of Luke on the subject, derived through Paul perhaps. Yet why the silence of John himself in his Gospel? That silence, it may be replied, admits of a very easy conjectural explanation. It is quite admissible to suppose a conference occurring between the two apostles, John and Matthew, on the question of just how it was wisest to manage so high and so delicate a matter. Let us freely and reverently imagine the course of a conversation between the two apostles.

Matthew says: 'There are already many unauthorized, though some of them doubtless well-meaning, attempts in writing to supply believers with information about the earthly life of their Lord. I now, with your approval, will undertake to prepare an account that may be fully trusted on the ground of the promise made by our Lord to his apostles that they should be guided by the Holy Spirit into all the truth necessary for them to know for the purpose of fulfilling their office of witnesses for him. Relying upon your nearly first-hand testimony, received from the mother of our Lord, I will relate the circumstances attending his birth.'

'But why,' Matthew may be imagined to ask, 'should not the apostle John himself write a history, and tell the wonderful story directly with his own hand out of his own knowledge imparted to him by the mother?'

John replies: 'I have indeed the purpose in due time to write a history of the gospel of Christ. This will be later than your work, and it will be cast in an entirely different mold from yours. I shall deal less with the earthly than with the heavenly Christ. There needs to be a representation of our Lord conceived from the point of view of his preexistence, and of his Godhead and equality with his Father. There will not need to be any repetition of the story which you will have told, and which perhaps our brother Paul will have secured the telling of at the hands of his well-accomplished confidential friend, Luke, the beloved physician. It is likely that Paul will not deem it necessary or wise to lay any stress on the point, so liable to invite scandalous skeptical treatment from the unbelieving world. In short, Matthew, your history will be of Jesus Christ, the son of *man*; my history will be of Jesus Christ, the Son of *God*, nay, as himself God indeed, entered into our human history, not expressly told how, but present here, the Word become flesh. If I let the time grow, following what we saw and heard with our natural senses, I shall perhaps grow myself in capacity to recognize our Lord, relieved to a great extent of earthly circumstance, as God indeed, condescending to sojourn among us in the quality of one come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. May God graciously enable me, enable both of us, to behold him from day to day in an ever more true perspective than that in which we knew him lately here on earth!'

In some way like that which has thus been conjectured as possible, both the narrative on the one hand and the silence on the other may quite reasonably be explained, and the holy truth of the virgin birth be left safely guarded as an article of absolutely unshaken faith on the part of all Christian believers.

VI

THE VISIT OF THE WISE-MEN

A LITTLE way back we left the mother Mary pondering in her heart the wonders that had accompanied the birth of her babe. But there were wonderful things very soon to follow that birth, and to become treasure of memory and matter of musing reminiscent meditation for Mary.

One of these wonderful things was a singular incident which Matthew alone relates :

Certain strangers from a distance—how great distance, we know not, that they were “from the East” is all that is told us—appeared in Bethlehem and paid a visit to Mary’s place of sojourn. We naturally figure these strangers as venerable in appearance, and we can hardly avoid making their number three, such being the quite groundless, but prevailing, tradition regarding them. In the Scripture narrative they are called Magians, or sages—“wise-men,” our Bibles translate the Greek word. Beyond this character attributed to them, and the fact just mentioned that they came from the East, all is mere conjecture, as to who, how many, what, and whence, they were. What, on their arrival at the house, they saw, is not said by Scripture to be Mary, with her child, but—the child, with his mother. They fell prostrate in obeisance, not to her, but to him ; not to her along with him, but to him alone. They did more. They opened their treasures and presented to him gifts. The gifts were such as befitted a prince to receive ; they consisted of gold, of frankincense, and of myrrh. With the bestowal of these gifts—their signs of homage paid as to a sovereign—the errand at Bethlehem of those mysterious

strangers seems to have been accomplished. They went away.

Their return journey, however, they made by a different course from that by which they had come. This change of course on their part was occasioned by a dream sent them from God. God's warning to them was—not to see Herod again. In coming, they had most naturally betaken themselves first to Herod, the king. He, they thought, should surely be to them the best source of information concerning the royal birth of which they had taken that journey to the Jewish capital, Jerusalem, to inquire; for the birth was of one destined to be "King of the Jews." Perhaps the "star" that they saw was, without other clue in their possession to the fact, interpreted by them to mean this birth. But we know that there was rife among the nations at this time, a rumor of one expected by the Jews soon to appear, who should be to them a great ruler and deliverer. This wide-spread rumor was doubtless due to that dispersion of the Jews which had already scattered them in considerable numbers all over the habitable globe. Every pilgrim Jew, wherever he went, bore with him, as a comfort, a support, and a boast, his hope of the promised Messiah to redeem Israel from the shame and the distress of the nation's bondage to the Gentiles.

The recourse of the wise-men to Herod had an undesigned and unexpected effect. They at first learned nothing to their purpose from Herod; but Herod at once learned something that he thought to his purpose from them. He was profoundly disturbed; and so was the city of Jerusalem with him. Herod's character was such, and such were his office and power, that his capital city felt, by ominous sympathy, many of the emotions that were first felt by the king. Herod thought that his royal dynasty was threatened. We know from Josephus that he was sensitive and jealous on this point, to the

extent even of putting to death those of his own kindred whom he deemed not sufficiently loyal to himself and his house.

Fresh suspicions and fears were now awakened in that uneasy royal heart. A "King of the Jews" born somewhere, of whom *he* knew nothing! With long-exercised art of concealment, he veiled his thoughts from his visitors. On some pretext, he seems to have detained the wise-men in Jerusalem, while he should make a certain remarkable inquiry; an inquiry for the purpose of which he called together the chief priests and the scribes of the people. Herod must either have had some effective first-hand knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures—though an Idumean (Edomite), he played the part of a Jew; or else, which is perhaps more probable, he had learned through general report concerning the nation's expectation of a great personage to arise among them in the character of a champion and a king. The remarkable question that he propounded to his Jewish advisers was this, Where is your expected Christ to be born? "In Bethlehem of Judea," was their reply.

Herod had now got part of what he wanted. He next secretly summoned the wise-men into conference, in order, if possible, to get from them the rest. They had told him, in their first audience, that they had seen the "star in the east" betokening the advent of the child whom they were thus come to Jerusalem to honor. Herod inquired now, "Exactly *when* did this star appear?" The answer of the wise-men, so he seems to have considered, revealed to him the *time*, as the answer of the Jewish doctors had previously revealed to him the *place*, of the appearing of the Christ. He would take measures accordingly, to make assurance doubly sure that there should be, here at least, no Messiah born to displace either him or his lineal successor on the throne. The measures that in fact he took were suitable to his character of craft and of cruelty. "Go to Bethlehem,"

said Herod to the wise-men; "and when you have found the famous child, return and let me know; I shall wish to come myself and do him homage."

The Eastern strangers withdrew from the royal presence, and, guided now by the star, which seems at this juncture to have reappeared, to their surprise and their joy, they came, without need of further inquiry, to the very cradle-side of the child. For the bright phenomenon (called perhaps only from its starlike resemblance, a "star," whatever in its real nature it was) moved before them as they moved, until it reached a station where it stood directly over the place in which the young child lay. Thus star-led to Jesus, those favored pilgrims from the East did the acts of homage to the infant Lord which have already been described.

Their visit and their worship may be taken as representing something far more than the mere individual impulse of the wise-men themselves. Was it not also a symbol in act of the now slowly accomplishing approach which we are this day beholding, of the great and populous Orient to bow in submission and obedience at the feet of the ascended and glorified Redeemer of men?

The appearance and the disappearance in history of those wise-men from the East have somewhat the same effect now to the imagination of the reader as their appearance and disappearance must have had then in the experience of Mary. They came to her out of mystery; and they vanished in mystery from her view and her knowledge. When ever, before or since, did any other group of nameless men go hand in hand together down such an endless shining track of universal human fame?

With the adoration of the Magi, the brilliant side was complete to the paradox of lowliness and lordliness in which Jesus was born. An historic atrocity must now follow to tinge with somber and with tragic the too-

cheerful background against which, without that foil, the birth of the suffering Saviour of mankind would here have been shown. Herod was enraged against the wise-men for not coming back to him. His rage stirred up his cruelty. Poor royal wretch, he was himself at this time in the torturing vise of a terrible mortal disease, and no doubt the pangs that he suffered clouded his reason and drove him frantic. But his natural and habitual way was to be inconceivably truculent and brutal. He comes down to us distinguished, among many rulers that bore the same name, by the historic epithet "Great." "Herod the Great" he richly deserved to be called, if eminence in wickedness could constitute the title required. He was certainly one of the very wickedest men of whom history has given us record.

The barbarity that he now committed is but one in a long list of crimes, among which this is the most celebrated only because it is associated with the memory of the most celebrated of men; not at all because it was the most monstrous. Indeed, revolting as it justly seems, it would, but for its connection with Jesus, have been quite lost from human recollection. For Josephus, our chief authority in the history of Herod, writing up a frightful catalogue of Herod's outrageous misdeeds, passes this one in silence, as perhaps in his view unworthy of mention.

But Josephus may not have known of it. For it is not necessary to suppose—indeed, it is contrary to probability—that Herod accomplished the massacre openly. It was doubtless an instigated wickedness, instigated and bargained for by Herod; it may have passed at the time for a piece of private violence, the perpetrators of which—this is conceivable, their employer was quite capable of such perfidy—may even have been punished, instead of being paid for it, by the perjured royal assassin-in-chief. It was nothing more than the murder of a number of innocent babes—all the male babes that there

were at the moment in Bethlehem two years old and under, estimated to have been at most some twelve or fifteen. The wails of the innocents slaughtered, the shrieks of the mothers bereaved, were doubtless loud enough in the hearing of the Lord God of Sabaoth; but they were not heard at the time by the nation at large, though they have never ceased to echo in the sympathetic ears of mankind.

Such was Herod's way of making himself and his royal house secure against *that* threatening danger. Let *all* the male babes at the moment in Bethlehem perish at a stroke! Thus, at least the one babe among them born to be King of the Jews, if such babe indeed there were, should not survive.

But Herod reckoned without taking God into the account. God had been beforehand with the tyrant. Already he had warned Joseph in a dream: "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Joseph obeyed; he remained in Egypt until Herod died, which was not long after. (The tyrant died miserably of his loathsome disease. "Eaten of worms" is the frightfully suggestive phrase that describes in Scripture the end of a grandson of this monarch. The same expression would fit the case of the grandfather, who reached the age of seventy—notwithstanding his excesses. He attempted suicide at last—in vain—as an escape from his sufferings.) Then, again instructed by a dream from God, Joseph came back into the land of Israel. Because, however, Archelaus, like-minded son of Herod, was reigning in his father's stead (though over only a part of his father's kingdom), Joseph, afraid to go into Judea, and directed by yet another dream divinely sent, went into Galilee and took up his abode with the child and with Mary in the city of Nazareth.

VII

THE PRESENTATION

UP to the present point we have followed without interruption a series of incidents in the infancy of Jesus, that seemed to belong together in a natural order of sequence. We turn back now a moment to introduce one or two other incidents which happened meantime, but on which we have thus far bestowed no attention.

The divine child was duly circumcised at the customary age—eight days, at the same time receiving his name, Jesus, the name prescribed for him beforehand by an angel—this independently both to Mary and to Joseph. At the close of forty days' time, he was taken to the temple at Jerusalem for the ceremony of presentation to the Lord. This rite was obligatory in the case of every firstborn Jewish male child.

There could, we should suppose, have been nothing outward to distinguish this child from many another presented in the temple, at near the same time, for the same dedication. As has already been said, the parents must have been very poor, since they made the least expensive offering in their child's behalf that the law of Moses permitted. It was doubtless part of the wisdom of God that he who was to become, through suffering, the Redeemer of the world, should enter an earthly lot that would, even at this earliest point, bring him into sympathetic relation, into quasi-equality of estate, with the lowliest of his human brethren.

But there were not wanting at the temple circumstances that should after all make the presentation of Jesus conspicuous. There was a man in Jerusalem—

perhaps only a sojourner there, by some divine coincidence brought thither at just this moment of time—whose character, as described by the sacred historian, fitted him beyond many to be let into the secrets of the counsel of God. This man's name was Simeon; and that name through him has become almost a synonym for amiable and venerable sanctity of spirit and life. He was a just man and devout, who kept himself in an attitude of believing and hopeful patience, waiting for the consolation prophesied for forlorn and afflicted Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him, not apparently for one particular occasion alone, but as a habit of his life—a calming and steadying, as well as an enlightening, power.

It had been revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that, however long he might have to wait for such fulfilment of his desire, he yet should not see death till his eyes had looked upon the person of the Christ of God. This aged sage and saint—aged, we think of him with certainty as being, although he is not expressly called so in Scripture—came one day into the temple with a prophetic sense divine, as would appear, possessing him, of something signal that day to happen there. For he came by the Spirit, it is told us by Luke. He was not to be disappointed. The parents of Jesus brought in their child, to fulfil the ritual requirements laid down by Moses touching a case like his. Whether or not Simeon waited for these requirements first to be fulfilled, does not appear. Either before or after the ceremonies that constituted the formal presentation of the child to the Lord, the mood of thankful recognition and prophecy invaded Simeon's heart, at the same time uplifting alike his faith into vision and his utterance into song. The scene seems visualized as we read the narrative in Scripture. "Now, Lord, lettest thou," so he broke forth, taking the child up in his arms, and, as we may conceive him, lifting his eyes toward heaven:

Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,
According to thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all
peoples;
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of thy people Israel.

It was partly like a cry of release and relief, as if there was now nothing left for which the speaker wished longer to live. He does not pray for deliverance from life; he seems to recognize and to accept deliverance as that day graciously granted him. It was, he testifies, "according to the word" of the Lord. There had been an understanding established between the saint and his heavenly Father that this was to be thus; and the saint did his part in acknowledging with thanks and with joy that his heavenly Father had already done his.

There is a note in Simeon's *Nunc Dimittis*—so, from the words beginning it in Latin, this outburst of Simeon is sometimes called—there is a note here that should not be missed. It is not simply a blessing for Israel that Simeon recognizes in the child whom he holds in his arms; there is also in that child a light for a revelation to the Gentiles. This constitutes the very earliest express mention occurring in New Testament times of the Gentiles' share in the salvation brought in the first instance to Israel by the advent of Christ.

Joseph and Mary stood wondering by, to hear the things spoken by Simeon. After all that had happened, their wonder could not have been wonder as at a disclosure entirely novel. Rather, we may conjecture, it was wonder at an unexpected confirmation of what they already knew; perhaps also at that enlargement of this, just noted, which took in the Gentiles as fellow heirs with the Jews of the blessing predicted. While the parents thus wondered, Simeon went on and blessed

them, in words not presented at full in the record. But to Mary, the mother, in particular, he said what must have mingled a mysterious bitter with the sweet of his prophecy: "Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea, and a sword shall pierce through thy own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." The pangs to Mary the mother, that were to pierce her soul like the thrusts of a sword—those are all past and done now; healing long ago followed, and then a perpetual peace. But it still holds true that, through Jesus, the thoughts of many hearts are revealed. For Jesus is now, as he was while he lived on earth, as he has always been since, and as he forever will be, a touchstone character and person. Every man is brought out to view, in his own true, deepest self, by the attitude that he takes—and some attitude every man that hears of him must take, be it only the attitude of unconcern and neglect—toward Jesus. Thus is it that the profoundly searching prophecy of Simeon persists in an incessant process of fulfilment; and the thoughts of many hearts are even yet infallibly revealed.

As if in order that woman not less than man, or rather that both the two equal halves of the one whole humanity, should take part in saluting the infant Saviour of the world, an aged widow also was present at the self-same moment in the temple, and she opened her mouth, along with Simeon—that is, in close sequel to him—in words not reported, concerning the child Jesus. Anna was this woman's name; and her father's name is also given, Phanuel, together with further the name of the tribe, Asher, to which she belonged. Anna is expressly styled a prophetess; a personage, she must have been, well known to the habitual visitors at the temple; for she made her home there, realizing for herself the blessing pronounced by the psalmist on those that "dwell" in the house of the Lord. Connected with the extensive

edifice called comprehensively the temple, and indeed architecturally one with that, were many attached buildings that afforded places of permanent residence for those engaged in the various services of the consecrated spot. This is probably what, thirty years or so afterward, suggested to Jesus the form of his saying, "In my Father's house are many mansions." From her chosen abode in one of the many mansions belonging to her heavenly Father's house below, Anna the prophetess no doubt was soon after removed to take up, when God should will it, her eternal residence in one of the many mansions belonging to her heavenly Father's house above. There, it is delightful to believe, she has since been learning every hour something new concerning him of whom in her earthly old age she faithfully spoke, according to her light, to all that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

VIII

THE BOY OF TWELVE

ONLY one more story remains to be told of that part of the life of Jesus which passed before his brief public career began. But that story is characteristic and beautiful. It is given us by Luke alone. "And the child grew and waxed strong, becoming filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him."

The foregoing scant information, repeated a few verses after in substance and almost in form, but hardly added to, is all that the frugal history of Luke reports—no one else tells us anything—concerning the childhood of Jesus, in Nazareth of Galilee. Nazareth was, in its natural aspects, a lovely home for the boy. It was a busy hamlet of some size, nestled high among limestone hills, out of the substance of which its houses, gleaming white in the Syrian sun, were built. Near was the great plain of Esdraelon rolling its waves of green, crested here and there with flowers of many hues, twenty miles or more away westward, to the foot of Mount Carmel overlooking the sea. The slopes of the hills on which Nazareth lay were, no doubt, in the days of the childhood of Jesus, terraced to the summits, and rich with the fruits of laborious tilth.

Galilee, throughout its whole extent, swarmed with people; and these could find their sustenance only as they industriously made the most of the natural resources of both the waters and the soil. The waters abounded with fish, and the soil was generously responsive to culture. Esdraelon is one of the most fertile plains or valleys in the world. Its fertility seems literally inexhaustible. For thousands of years, appa-

rently without the application of manures, it has gone on yielding its plenteous, its undiminishing, harvests of grain. The prodigal bounty of the soil, as if to show that its strength is more than any amount of merely useful labor can tire, frolics everywhere into flowers bright and beautiful and various beyond what the present writer remembers to have seen anywhere else in the world produced by the wild exuberance of nature. The hillsides round about are also gay in springtime with flowers. The voices of birds regale the ear, as the forms and colors of blossoms delight the eye.

Amid such scenes and conditions of physical nature, the boyhood of Jesus was passed. Few traces, however, of influence on his character, from the outward world that immediately environed him in his boyhood and youth, are to be recognized either in the words or in the deeds of his manhood. The forms, it is true, under which he taught were in many instances affected by his own individual situation and experience in life. But that in him which in other men we should call by the name of genius, or of mental and moral bent—that deep determining something, that basis of personality, which constituted him what he was—remained to the last apparently quite independent of any molding power from the outward circumstances of his earthly lot.

Of the influence of his home life upon the boy, we know nothing; but we may with confidence conjecture much. The woman that could chant, in celebration of her choice by God to such motherhood as hers, Mary's noble *Magnificat*, was certainly a mother that would train, and that could train, her son from his tenderest years in knowledge of the Scriptures. That psalm itself is so much molded on Old Testament models of thought and of expression, that some critics have even denied to it any originality. Wise critics will, on the contrary, find in it precisely such human originality, and no other, as was fit to one like the author of it, placed in a situation

like hers; while also finding in it a breath of different inspiration that could come only from heaven.

Of the father we know little, but the little that we do know is all favorable to his character. If, as might seem, he was somewhat deficient in the stronger, more positive elements of manhood, such deficiency did not in the least disqualify him for dealing wisely and well with a son like his son, who needed neither correction nor restraint. It could not but be that a devout believer such as Joseph was would be prepared to stand in a kind of awe before the boy, whom yet he felt providentially bound to bring up as being indeed—though being only in seeming—his son. It is delightful, and at the same time awe-inspiring, to think of the child Jesus in that unique relation which such a child must necessarily hold to one like Joseph standing in the father's place, while not the father. Doubtless the divinity in Jesus was veiled sufficiently to Joseph, not to dazzle or to confound him. It was also, we must suppose, in some degree, perhaps indeed wholly, unconscious to the boy himself.

At any rate, to whatever degree, great or little, hidden from being recognized by himself or by others, it certainly did not work to exempt Jesus from the duty of filial obedience. It is expressly told us that as to his parents, he was "subject to them." Meantime, as also it is expressly told us—and that this, and with a single exception this only, should expressly be told us concerning his childhood, is worthy of note—meantime, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." This is said by the Evangelist, *after* he has said that the boy had entered, noticeably it must have been, upon a course of being "filled with wisdom." The increase spoken of would seem, therefore, to have been something much more than the ordinary advance in knowledge observable in children, keeping pace with

their years. It is strikingly characteristic of the strict sobriety of the narrative of Luke, that no marvelous stories are told by him to illustrate his own strong general statement as to the mental proficiency of Jesus in his youth. The anecdote now to be given, which constitutes the single exception already mentioned to this abstinence on the Evangelist's part, is in truth hardly an exception.

It comes out incidentally in Luke's narrative, that Joseph and Mary were in the habit of making yearly pilgrimages to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. On one of these occasions, the boy Jesus, having reached the age of twelve years, and now perhaps for the first time since his infancy visiting Jerusalem, remained behind in the city, after his parents had started on their return way to Nazareth. The lad was not missed until a day's journey in the direction of home had been accomplished by the parents. There were, it appears, a considerable number of their kindred and neighbors traveling with Joseph and Mary. The parents had supposed that their son was somewhere in this company; and naturally they were much concerned when they found that he was not. They retraced their steps all the way back to the city. It was not till the third day—that is, probably the third day after the homeward start of the parents without their boy—that they discovered him. He was in the temple, seated among the doctors of the law, hearing their discourse and asking them questions. Those that were present as witnesses of the scene were astonished at the Galilean lad's evident intelligence. The parents themselves seem to have been surprised by what they saw, quite as much as they were relieved and delighted. "They were amazed," is the strong expression of Luke. Mary gave voice to their emotions. She gently chided her boy. "Child," said she, "why didst thou thus deal with us? Behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing."

At first blush, our instinctive sympathies are with the mother in the case. We are tempted to feel that she had good ground for her tender reproof. It does not, on the face of it, look like quite a fair way of behavior for a dutiful son toward his parents. But Jesus in his reply admits no fault of conduct on his own part. He does not (so far as reported) express sympathetic regret at his parents' sorrow on his behalf. He merely expresses a surprise which seems almost to retort a certain blame on Joseph and Mary. He says: "How is it that ye sought me? [Why should ye not have been clear where to find me?] Did ye not know that I must be in my Father's house?" "*My Father's*"! Perhaps, appropriately, on the eve of that very visit to Jerusalem, the boy Jesus, now just twelve years old (when, according to Jewish usage, he was of age to become "son of the law"), had, for the first time, been told by his mother and Joseph, in preparation for this epochal journey, in what unique sense God was his Father.

Now the fact that Jesus was sinless—this by his own claim, not disputed even by his enemies ("Which of you convinces me of sin?" he asked them once, and they made no reply)—this fact obliges us to seek an explanation of his deportment on the present occasion. In the case of an ordinary twelve-year-old boy, we should not, without some adequate explanation to relieve his behavior, acquit him of blame if he should stay behind his parents in a strange city, they not knowing that he purposed doing so, still less having given him their approval of such purpose on his part. What justified conduct like this in Jesus?

It is not necessary to suppose that there was any intentional, or even conscious, separation of himself from his parents on the part of Jesus. There may have been an innocent misunderstanding between the parents and the son as to the plan of the return. The parents

perhaps assumed that the son knew what, in fact, he did not know, about the proposed time of the start homeward. They were occupied, it may be, with necessary preparations, while the son repaired to the temple, drawn by his instinct for "things divine." The preparations completed, the start, we may conjecture, was made without attention on the parents' part to the fact that their son was not among the company traveling with them. This might easily happen amid the bustle and confusion incident to the beginning of such a journey by such a number of persons. The boy meantime intent upon his object in the temple, and not aware of what was going on outside, stays hour after hour, until at last the day is spent. His parents will know where to find him, he reflects, and his mind, filial at once toward God, his heavenly Father, and toward his earthly parents, abides in perfect peace.

What has thus far been said, has been said independently of anything supernatural in the character of the boy Jesus, or in the consequent relation subsisting between him, and his parents. But we cannot properly leave this important consideration out of account. And in view of this consideration, it is not too much to say that if fault were committed on either side, it was committed on the side of the parents rather than on the side of the son. Knowing, as those parents both of them knew, what the peculiar divine relation of Jesus was, having in addition observed, through twelve years of that unique childhood in their son, what his transcendent character and mission were, they were bound to watch the signs of special impulse and development in their sinless child, and see to it that, so far as lay in their power, he should in spiritual things have his own way, unhindered and unchecked.

In accordance with this obvious duty on the parents' part, the waiting, if any waiting on either side were needful to be done, should have been done by them on

their boy rather than by their boy on them, as far as concerned, for instance, the matter of determining when he was to leave his business in his Father's house. At any rate, the boy Jesus had a sense of a different, a paramount, obligation that might properly, upon occasion requiring it, transcend and override his obligation to his earthly parents. There should have been no conflict between these two obligations. Perhaps in fact there was none. But if, on the contrary, such conflict there was, the fault was not in him who rightfully made the obligation to God greater. It was in those rather, if any such there were, who interposed their claim in preference to God's.

We cannot fail to see that there was some imputation, however slight, of reproach in the mother's words to Jesus. We can as little fail to see that not only was there no confession following, from the son, of fault on his part, but instead there was such language used by him as may easily be understood to imply a certain sweet and gracious reflection of reproach and blame upon the parents. Their fault—if they committed fault—perhaps lay in something deeper than either the mere administering to him of undeserved reproof, or the failure to know where they would be sure to find their missing son. It may be that they had declined somewhat from the high spirit of faith and vision in which they began their relationship to Jesus before his birth and at his birth. We shall as we proceed come upon other occasions for observing Mary under some shadow of disapproval from her son.

“Blessed among women,” as she was, Mary seems not to have been always quite perfect before God. It is even remarkable that, save only that tender commendation of Mary to John by the dying Saviour on the cross, the Scripture gives no instance in which the Ideal Son speaks either to or of his mother otherwise than with some accompanying implication of blame. It seems like a

rebuke beforehand of that false regard for Mary which was destined afterward to reach the idolatrous excess of associating the virgin mother with the divine Son himself—nay, sometimes of exalting her above the Son, in claim to human homage.

“And they understood not the saying which he spoke to them”—so Luke tells us, with reference to that question addressed to them by Jesus, “Did ye not know that it was needful for me to be in my Father’s house?” To us—at the end of nineteen centuries of Christian history, lying luminous to our backward-looking eyes against the background of what we know Christ subsequently did, and said, and suffered, and was—it may seem at first thought strange that the parents of the youthful Jesus should have been at any loss to understand the purport of those words from their son. Had they forgotten the wonders in which he was born? Had they forgotten the solemn significance of the message brought them by the announcing angel? Had they forgotten what Simeon said, and Anna, in the temple?

Not altogether, certainly. But imagine the every-day routine of commonplace through which their shut-in and laborious life was drawn out at Nazareth. Remember that other children were given them, as the years went by, to divide the parental care with Jesus. Consider that the preternatural character of this particular child of theirs was meantime probably suspended in a kind of abeyance and unconsciousness, necessary in order to proper preparation on his part in secret for the work which—but not before the fulness of his time was come—he should accomplish in the face of the world. Take all these things duly into account, and nothing assuredly will seem more likely than that, in the course of such experience on the part of the parents, and of such divinely purposed, though it may be unconscious, hiding of himself on the part of the son, the parents’ impression of what had passed mysteriously so long before,

should have grown gradually somewhat obscure and dim to them; at least should have ceased to exercise a present and vivid influence on their habitual ways of regarding their boy.

The New Testament idylls of the birth, the infancy, the boyhood, of Jesus—they are beautiful, but do they answer to realities? Are they truth, or are they poetry? Are they perhaps both truth and poetry? Both, let us confidently reply. These idylls are truth, and the truth which they are is poetry. It would have been strange indeed—nay, but it would have been inadmissibly strange—if such a life as that of Jesus, ending in such a death as his, then followed by such a resurrection, should not have begun with miracle. That, were it once supposed as true, would be an occasion of doubt and misgiving with regard to the alleged facts of all the after history. The miracle of the life, the character, the death, the resurrection, of Jesus may be said almost to require miracle preceding, attending, following, his birth; it may certainly be said to make such miracle in the highest degree probable.

But observe how little, after all, is the measure of the miracle that contented the divine requirement—how little, that is to say, additional to the one chief miracle of all, the miracle of God becoming man. The fact of that miracle granted, the method of the miracle followed strictly as a matter of course. There was no other method even conceivable to men. But, beyond the miracle, confessed to be stupendous, of the divine incarnation itself, how marvelous the paucity of things marvelous in the narrative of the beginning of Christ's life on earth! There is no extravagance here, no ostentation, no excess. All is divinely moderate and restrained. And, besides the quantity of the demonstration, so limited, consider the quality of it—how exquisitely adapted, how simple, how beautiful! Human invention would not have satis-

fied itself so easily. Witness the bizarre extravagances of the parallel Buddhist legends. Witness the rejected riotous mythologies of the apocryphal so-called "Gospels of the Infancy." Those are things such as the unchecked, unguided human imagination produces. The New Testament idylls are history. Thus only are explained their existence, their frugality in number, their moderation of tone, their simplicity, their fitness, their beauty, their indestructible, their invulnerable, life.

IX

EIGHTEEN SILENT YEARS

A BLANK page, or rather a page blank except for an inscription on it of these words only, "He was subject to them" [his parents], and, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men," would be the fitting chapter in this history to cover the next eighteen years of the most memorable human life ever lived on earth. There exists in the record such a gap of absolute silence and mystery as renders it strange that the myth-makers have never sought to fill it up with their fictions. We have apocryphal "Gospels of the Infancy" of Jesus still extant, written no one knows exactly when. We have apocryphal "Acts" in abundance. But there have been, so far as the present writer knows, no attempts on the part of myth-makers to bridge over with the fabrications of fancy the historical chasm which yawns, vacant and mysterious, between the thirteenth year of Jesus and his thirtieth. We suppose indeed, not without probability, that Jesus learned and practised the trade of his father, that of a worker in wood. We idealize about it, and say, 'How faithfully, how fairly, with what industry, with what cheer, with what skill, that Perfect Man must have wrought!' Safe idealization, no doubt; but perhaps after all the most reverent way, and the wisest, the most wholesome, and in every respect the best, is to leave the entire interval, as Scripture leaves it, impressively voiceless.

The few following extracts from the books of myth that were written early—some of them perhaps from seventeen hundred to eighteen hundred years ago—about Jesus the boy, may serve instructively to hint what sort

of stories might have been produced concerning the youth of Jesus, had the imagination of man set itself to the work of supplying the void in history which marks the period referred to. These fictions need no comment. The contrast between them and the historical accounts of the New Testament is in its bare self stronger than any rhetoric of remark could make it.

The so-called "First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ" expands the account furnished by Luke of the boy Jesus in the temple into arid and idle extravagances like the following:

"When a certain astronomer, who was present, asked the Lord Jesus whether he had studied astronomy, the Lord Jesus replied, and told him the number of the spheres and heavenly bodies, as also their triangular, square, and sextile aspect; their progressive and retrograde motion; their size, and several prognostications; and other things, which the reason of man had never discovered.

"There was also among them a philosopher, well skilled in physic and natural philosophy, who asked the Lord Jesus whether he had studied physic. He replied, and explained to him physics and metaphysics, also those things which were above and below the power of nature; the powers also of the body, its humors and their effects; also the number of its members, and bones, veins, arteries, and nerves; the several constitutions of the body, hot and dry, cold and moist, and the tendencies of them; how the soul operated upon the body; what its various sensations and faculties were; the faculty of speaking, anger, desire; and lastly, the manner of its composition and dissolution; and other things, which the understanding of no creature had ever reached."

The same "Gospel of the Infancy," in an earlier chapter, has the following to tell about the part which the boy Jesus took in helping Joseph at his trade:

“ And Joseph, wheresoever he went in the city, took the Lord Jesus with him, where he was sent for to work, to make gates, or milk-pails, or sieves, or boxes; the Lord Jesus was with him, wheresoever he went. And as often as Joseph had anything in his work to make longer or shorter, or wider or narrower, the Lord Jesus would stretch his hand toward it. And presently it became as Joseph would have it. So that he had no need to finish anything with his own hands, for he was not very skilful at his carpenter’s trade.”

“ Thomas’s Gospel of the Infancy ” has the following :

“ When the child Jesus was five years of age, and there had been a shower of rain, which was now over, Jesus was playing with other Hebrew boys by a running stream; and the water, running over the banks, stood in little lakes; but the waters instantly became clear and useful again; he having smote them only by his word, they readily obeyed him. Then he took from the bank of the stream some soft clay, and formed out of it twelve sparrows; and there were other boys playing with him. But a certain Jew, seeing the things which he was doing, namely, his forming clay into the figures of sparrows on the sabbath day, went presently away, and told his father Joseph, and said, Behold, thy boy is playing by the riverside, and has taken clay, and formed it into twelve sparrows, and profaneth the sabbath. Then Joseph came to the place where he was, and when he saw him, called to him, and said, Why doest thou that which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath day? Then Jesus, clapping together the palms of his hands, called to the sparrows, and said to them, Go, fly away; and while ye live remember me. So the sparrows fled away, making a noise.”

Also the following monstrous profaneness :

“Another time Jesus went forth into the street, and a boy, running by, rushed upon his shoulder; at which Jesus, being angry, said to him, Thou shalt go no farther. And he instantly fell down dead; which when some persons saw, they said, Where was this boy born, that everything which he says presently cometh to pass? Then the parents of the dead boy, going to Joseph, complained, saying, You are not fit to live with us in our city, having such a boy as that: either teach him that he bless and not curse, or else depart hence with him, for he kills our children.

“Then Joseph, calling the boy Jesus by himself, instructed him, saying, Why doest thou such things to injure the people, so that they hate us and persecute us? But Jesus replied, I know that what thou sayest is not of thyself, but for thy sake I will say nothing; but they who have said these things to thee, shall suffer everlasting punishment. And immediately they who had accused him became blind.”

Who that wisely loves either truth or poetry would not prefer, to puerilities and blasphemies such as the foregoing about the infancy and boyhood of Jesus, the eighteen silent years that the New Testament history leaves us, stretched unbroken between the twelve-year-old lad's appearance in the temple and the going forth to be baptized by John of the young man of thirty, ready now for the self-sacrifice of his life and his death?

X

A VOICE

THE voice was that of Elizabeth's son, John, the cousin of Jesus. "John the Baptist" is the historic name by which he is known—"the Baptist" being a designation equivalent to "the Baptizer." Baptizing was the conspicuous visible feature of the work that he performed.

There is no other great active figure in history at once so distinct, so striking, so heroic, so noble, and, in the details of his character and career, so little known, as John the Baptist. We have the highest authority that ever uttered itself in human speech, for pronouncing this Hebrew prophet the peer of any man whatsoever that, up to his time, had arisen anywhere on earth in any age of the world. "Verily I say unto you," said Jesus, in that solemn form of asseveration which from those lips became so incomparably impressive, "among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." If we recall that Abraham had arisen, and Moses, and David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, among the Jews, and that among the Gentiles had arisen Socrates, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar—we shall better appreciate the towering, overtopping greatness attributed thus by Jesus to that lonely denizen of the desert of Judea. What other human being had ever, by name, a testimony to his comparative rank of greatness among his fellows, worthy to be once mentioned as parallel to that?

How suddenly this commanding human figure strides forth out of absolute obscurity into the broad blaze of publicity—a publicity as illuminative as ever yet shone

briefly and brilliantly about any man in the whole course of history! "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," cries the voice abruptly aloud; and, from end to end, as from side to side, the land rings again with the tones of the message. The aspect and habit of the crier accorded with the peremptory purport of the cry. His raiment was woven of camel's hair, and he wore a girdle of leather about his loins. He fed on locusts and wild honey. He made his haunt the uninhabited wilderness of Judea; and it was there that he lifted up his voice. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," was his own description of himself, taken out of Isaiah the prophet. Out of the same prophet John took also the words of the cry,

Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight.

The phrase was different, but the sense was the same as when the summons had its other form, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the one case, it was the kingdom approaching; in the other, the King.

The language is the language of one performing the part of a forerunner. Even yet in the East, important personages driving with some ceremony through the streets are preceded at a little interval by young men strikingly dressed who keep up, panting, but proud of their office, a rapid run in advance of the equipages of their masters, crying out as they go a shrill, ringing, imperious warning to everybody in the way to prepare a broad clear passage for the great ones coming. Such is the imagery under which John the Baptist is presented—under which he presents himself—as a "forerunner," announcing to men the nearing advent of "the Lord." That Lord was Jesus—now about to take up his vocation as the promised, the long-expected, Messiah. But this John himself did not yet seem exactly to know. Indeed, at times he seems almost literally a Voice, rather than

an Intelligence, in respect to the message that he bore. The great heart that he was—great, self-postponing, self-effacing heart! Never a repining word out of his mouth! Never a syllable to imply that he felt it a hardship to be himself only a forerunner, while another than he was the one chosen to be the King! “There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.” How willingly that “burning and shining light” paled away and lost itself in the splendor of the sun which, as morning star, he heralded! All praise and honor to John, the solemn, the joyful, self-effacer!

Such a voice as he did not need to go to the multitude in order to be heard. The multitude came instead to him to hear. The wilderness was suddenly populous; for in the strong language of the Evangelist Matthew, “There went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.” It must have been a remarkable movement and concourse of people. They came to hear; they heard, and were baptized. The place of the baptizing was the river Jordan. Those baptized accompanied this, their act of obedience to the summons of John, with a confession of their sins.

But among the thousands on thousands that thus thronged to the baptism of John, there came one offering himself for the rite who had no sins to confess. The stern Baptist was staggered. He did not afterward flinch before Herod the tetrarch; although, in confronting that tyrant with bold denunciation of his sins and his crimes, he took the risk of going, as indeed he went, to prison and to death, for his fidelity. But before this Comer to his baptism John was abashed. It was his own cousin that came, his cousin and his junior; but he was abashed.

The newcomer was from Galilee, from Nazareth. It was Jesus. The Baptist expostulated. “I have need to be baptized of thee,” he said, “and comest thou to me?”

How much previous personal acquaintance with Jesus John had had, we are furnished with little means of knowing. The ways of life for the two cousins were very different. John haunted the desert, while Jesus lived among his fellow men—Jesus moreover in Galilee, John in the wilderness of Judea.

But somehow John had come to know his kinsman deeply. We can hardly doubt that he had heard something of the story of his own birth and of the birth of Jesus. It may be that now first, at this moment so pregnant, was borne from above into the soul of the Baptist a sense divine of the extraordinary character and mission of his cousin. Some such sudden revelation perhaps it was, unlooked-for, surprising, that led him to utter his almost involuntary words of deprecation to Jesus. It must have awed the beholders, when they saw a man who awed every one else, now himself thus awed in the presence of an applicant for his baptism. But with that meekness of majesty, that majesty of meekness, which characterized Jesus, he made his reassuring reply. "Suffer it now," he said; "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

"Us"! It was not often that Jesus, in his recorded discourse, joined himself with any other man by saying "we," "our," "us." But he did so on the present occasion. It was a noble recognition of John, as joined in a kind of transcendent partnership with himself. John, having performed his needful act of self-postponing homage thus rendered as to his Lord, made no further pause or objection. His humility was the true humility of immediate obedience. He baptized Jesus in the stream of the Jordan. It was almost as if in divinely purposed prophetic prefiguration of the death which the one thus baptized should so soon accomplish at Jerusalem. "I have a baptism to be baptized with," Jesus solemnly said once, in prospect of his then imminent obedience unto death. The language was remarkable. It is not unlikely

that, in being baptized by John, Jesus had some premonition in his soul of this symbolic and prophetic meaning hidden in the act. The act, so far as his own part in it was concerned, was at least, in speaking emblem, a whole dedication of himself to the work that he was to do, and to the suffering for sin that, as "Lamb of God," he was to undergo.

Such an occurrence as this on earth could not pass without divine demonstration of some sort from heaven. That which in fact happened is very briefly, very unostentatiously, described. It was august in its simplicity, its fitness, its sufficiency. The exact point at which it occurred was when Jesus, having been baptized, was coming up out of the water; that is, when this great act of obedience and self-dedication on his part had just been performed, was now freshly complete. The heavens were opened.

This visible phenomenon was a striking part of the occurrence. Mark, the graphic Evangelist, says, "rent asunder," instead of, more quietly, "opened." This suggests a rupture of the sky—a "kindly rupture" (to use Milton's phrase applied by him to something far different) it must certainly have been; while yet an act of parting visible and noticeable to a qualified observer.

"A qualified observer," let it be remarked; for it seems not clear that any one saw this phenomenon but Jesus himself. The statement of Matthew is that the heavens were opened "*unto him*, and he saw." He saw yet another phenomenon not less remarkable than the rupture of the sky. Mark says that "he saw the heavens rent asunder and" with that rending asunder of the heavens—the same sequel as the one also described by Matthew. Luke alone uses language which might imply that others than Jesus himself saw these extraordinary phenomena; he says simply, in general terms, "the heaven was opened," adding, however, in

description, the interesting point that Jesus was "praying" at the moment when these things took place.

John, it should be noted, John the Evangelist, reports John the Baptist as saying afterward, "I have beheld." So that John at least, the baptizer, along with Jesus, the baptized, saw what immediately succeeded the sublime celestial phenomenon of the sky opening over that unique baptismal scene. And this is what immediately succeeded, told in the words of John the Baptist as reported by John the Evangelist: "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him" [Jesus]. That heaven-descended dove, symbolic of the Spirit, was to be a sign from God to John, indicating that he on whom it alighted was the Coming One. It was, John says, for the purpose of making manifest to Israel the promised Messiah—"the Son of God," as John the Baptist here calls him—that he himself came baptizing in water. He that should come after would baptize in the Holy Spirit instead.

But there was something more than has yet been described, in that amazing demonstration from heaven. The ear was appealed to, as well as the eye. A voice came out of the heavens: "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." So Mark and Luke report that audible voice from heaven; in form, as if it directly addressed Jesus himself. Matthew gives it a turn, as if it were addressed to bystanders and observers; or, as if it were intended for assurance to John at least not less than to Jesus. It is possible, indeed, that both forms of speech were used. But it seems more likely that here is an example in the Gospels of that freedom from rigid regard for non-essential details, which to wise readers of history always seems confirmatory, rather than destructive, of the substantial trustworthiness of parallel narratives.

The baptism of Jesus, constituting his solemn inauguration to the Messianic office, was now accomplished, with

the accompaniment of those awful and beautiful signs from heaven which have been described. At the same moment was mainly accomplished the Baptist's brief mission of forerunner to Jesus; for the Messiah was now "made manifest to Israel." John's earthly career would henceforth hasten to its tragic conclusion. But there remained to him a period of continued testimony on behalf of the manifested Messiah, followed by a moment of pathetic suspense and doubt on his part.

To Jesus, before the commencing of his public activity, there remained a period of mysterious trial.

XI

THE TEMPTATION

AN event so momentous in the history of the world—of the moral universe, we may say—as the open induction into office, with attestation from heaven, of one solemnly undertaking to be champion of humanity, to be Redeemer of men, to be Destroyer of death and of him that had the power of death, that is, the devil—this obviously could not fail to attract the attention and the presence of any adversary to the purpose in view, who might at once have knowledge of the fact and be able to come and observe in person what happened. Such an adversary there was, and the name by which he is known is “the devil.” We need not doubt that the devil was present at the baptism of Jesus. The event took place on earth; but it was witnessed both from heaven and from hell.

The period of mysterious trial that after his baptism immediately followed to Jesus, presents one of the profoundest problems in the whole gospel history. Read Matthew’s plain, brief statement of fact: “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” No interval apparently elapsed between the baptism and this Spirit-led resort of Jesus to the wilderness. Mark uses his favorite adverb, and says that what is thus narrated happened “straightway.” At another point he varies slightly from Matthew, choosing a strangely vivid different word. He says, “The Spirit *driveth* him.”

If the statement of the Evangelists were that the Spirit urged Jesus into the wilderness—this, and nothing more—it would seem easier to understand. Some

wonder it still might occasion that the Messiah should thus begin his public ministry by hiding himself. But we should say, 'Doubtless he retired for a season of lonely meditation, self-examination, and prayer.' If the statement were double instead of single, if it read that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, *and* the devil there tempted him, that, again, would be a less difficult problem than the one which actually confronts us. But he was led thither by the Spirit *for* the devil to tempt him. The problem could hardly be more difficult.

What is the meaning of the narrative? What was the purpose of the things narrated? We shall be in a better position for answering these questions when we have the whole of the narrative before us.

The experience of Jesus in the wilderness began with a long fast—a fast of forty days and forty nights. It used to be objected by skeptics that such a fast was impossible; that no man could live so long without food. We know now that men have lived even longer than that, without either food or drink. But in the case of Jesus there is no reason for seeking to escape the supposition of miracle. In fact, it is expressly told us by both Matthew and Mark that on this occasion a miracle occurred; for, immediately on the conclusion of the forty days' fast the angels ministered unto him. It is safe to say that never, up to that time, had the angels performed their ministering office with equal delight. The word translated "ministered" is to be understood as implying that the angels brought food to the Lord.

The temptation from the devil that was suffered by Jesus *during* the forty days' fast is left unrelated, unhinted, by the Evangelists. It is not expressly stated that Jesus, throughout this whole experience of his, was without human companionship. But such, no doubt, is the meaning. "He was with the wild beasts," says Mark.

That lonely wrestle with Satan, prolonged through forty days and nights of fasting! Was it also sleepless? What were the incidents of it? No one knows. Jesus seems not to have felt the need of food to sustain him. But at the end of forty days—not till then—he hungered.

It was while he was in this state of conscious craving for food that the first *recorded* temptation from Satan befell him. "The tempter"—so Matthew here names the mysterious being alluded to, but Luke still calls him "the devil"—"came and said unto him." This form of expression seems to imply that the presence and urgency of the devil intermitted at times. The tempter perhaps withdrew now and again to meditate some changed mode of assault. The first expedient was adapted to the perceived present condition of Jesus.

In what form the devil appeared, or whether in any visible form; with what voice he spoke, or whether with any audible voice, we are not informed, nor need we ask or conjecture. He "said"—that is, he intelligibly conveyed somehow to Jesus this meaning: "If thou art the Son of God"—"Son of God," Satan had no doubt heard pronounced from heaven as the name of his adversary—"If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread."

The wilderness of Judea, a desolate region lying south-east of Jerusalem, abounds with loose stones. Many of these are flat, not unlike in shape the thin outrolled loaves in which the Syrians bake their bread. The suggestion was a not unnatural one. Those stones, by a mere miraculous word from the mouth of the Son of God, might be changed into loaves of bread. Not an instant's lodgment did the impious suggestion gain in the breast of Jesus. If miracle could sustain him through stones made bread, equally could miracle sustain him without the intervention of bread, however produced or however provided. The reply was prompt, and it was drawn from Scripture: "It is written, man shall not live

by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This was equivalent to saying, 'I do not depend on bread for life; I live directly from God.'

The temptation was in effect a temptation to forsake God, by ceasing to trust him. Jesus was there in the wilderness not on his own errand, but on God's. He had put himself in God's hands in the very act of going. In truth, he not so much *went*, as "was led," was "driven." It was not time yet, it never would be time to Jesus, to take himself out of God's hands.

There was no use of discussing with one that could answer, and that would answer, like that; and Satan did not press his point. He tried a fresh expedient. He took Jesus away from the wilderness into the holy city, and there stationed him aloft on the pinnacle of the temple. Just what this station was, has been much questioned. We need not trouble ourselves to settle the point. It was a station of great height, perhaps looking down a sheer wall of rock masonry into the depths of the Kedron valley below. Satan seems to have taken his cue for the particular temptation now proposed to Jesus from the spirit of the reply with which he himself had just been met and foiled. The tempter said to himself: 'This enemy of mine makes a great point of *trust*. I will offer him a chance to exercise his favorite virtue. He loves Scripture, it seems; I will recommend my proposal with a text.'

"If thou art the Son of God," said Satan to Jesus, "fling thyself down from hence; for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee'; and, 'On their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.'" If this temptation succeeded, Jesus would commit the sin of presumption. And any sin whatsoever from him would answer the purpose of the tempter. For no one could be a Saviour from sin who was himself a sinner. "Again

it is written," said Jesus to Satan, "'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"

This time, also, Satan tried no parley. Crestfallen he must have been; but he had one master-stroke in reserve. He took Jesus with him to the summit of an "exceeding high mountain," and thence showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. How Jesus was thus transported, what the "exceeding high mountain" was, what means were used for the world-wide panoramic display—the "show" may have been a mere show, or ocular illusion—whether the glory of the kingdoms was expatiated upon to the ear, as well as flashed in vision on the eye—these are questions that have much tempted conjecture; but they shall here be passed in silence.

The existence, the activity, the knowledge, the power, of a spiritual being such as the devil is represented in Scripture to be, may well stagger and confound us; but that there is a living and dreadful personal reality corresponding, cannot be doubted by any one who is willing to understand the language of the Bible in its obviously intended meaning, and to accept its statements, thus understood, as true. With the reality of the devil of Scripture supposed, the present narrative becomes entirely credible—credible, observe, but by no means therefore, at all the more comprehensible. Comprehensible to us, it probably never will be.

But it is perfectly reasonable to say that, let the matter be wisely considered, the fact of a signal temptation to Jesus from the devil is far easier to believe than it would be to disbelieve it. Granted the existence of a person like the devil, it follows, with the force of demonstration, that he certainly would summon all his power and all his craft, and this in one concentrated, supreme exertion promptly put forth against a recognized adversary like Jesus. Satan, we may be sure, waited only to be cer-

tain who his predestined adversary was, to attempt that adversary's overthrow. And perhaps the Holy Spirit resident in Jesus urged him into the wilderness, only in order that he might there endure his inevitable temptation from Satan—there, rather than elsewhere. It should be a duel, with no witnesses, no seconds, on either side; a long and deadly grapple joined between the two combatants alone.

The privilege and power of Satan were formidable, were tremendous. He seems to have been denied nothing in the way of what might be called outward or material resource. He could apparently do with Jesus what he would, only so as not to touch his soul within him in any way except in the way of proffered bribe and inducement. He has now rapt on high the alleged Son of God, the predicted Saviour of men, to a mountaintop, whence, through some optic effect not described, the kingdoms of the world with their glory are subject, or seem subject, to view. He dilates vauntingly on the spectacle, claims that all is his own to bestow, and dazlingly offers to lavish all upon Jesus on a single condition—which he names.

Now we are likely to mistake. This is not to be regarded as a boastful offer of Satan's that he could not make good. It was not mere impudent, empty, lying braggadocio on his part. The lie that was in the offer was not the open lie of an utterly false claim from Satan to power which he did not possess. It is mysteriously true that, in a certain sense, the lordship of the world was indeed his own. Jesus himself does not scruple to call Satan the "prince of this world."

The lie in the tempter's words was a covered lie. It lay hidden in the suggestion, the implication, that such a kingdom of the world as Satan could bestow, was the kingdom that Jesus came to win. The idea was a specious one. The alternative virtually presented to Jesus was—kingdom through suffering, shame, and death after

long delay (compare that notable expression in Scripture, "the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ"); or, kingdom at once, with no cost at all to himself. No cost, except—

Except what? Why, only a form, a gesture, a posture. The soul need take no part in it. It was something purely outward. Jesus had merely to acknowledge the giver of the kingdom by an act befitting a loyal liege. He was but to fall down, in Oriental obeisance, at the feet of the bestower. That was all. It was the work of an instant. A bow, a prostration, and the world at once was his—that world which he had come so painfully to win. "It hath been delivered unto me," so Satan not quite untruthfully asserted; "and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine." The tempter got his answer with no pause from the tempted. It came, like the previous answers, in terms of Scripture: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

But in this third case there was a preface. "Get thee hence, Satan," Jesus first said; as if now he inwardly felt sure, and was quite ready to announce, that the tempter had stretched the full length of his tether. Thereupon Satan withdrew, and Jesus was left alone once more. But not long alone; for, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. Fitter companionship for this meek conqueror, than the "wild beasts" that had surrounded him before!

Luke adds the mysterious clause, "for a season," to his statement that Satan departed from Jesus. Jesus, just before he suffered in the garden, said pregnantly, "The prince of this world cometh." The "season" during which our Saviour should enjoy exemption from the access of Satan was perhaps then, and not till then, concluded. To his announcement that Satan was coming, Jesus added the calm, confident words, "and hath

nothing in me." Satan never had anything in Jesus. There was nothing ever in that holy breast that for an instant responded, even doubtfully, to the instigations of the devil. The "temptation," so-called, was wholly from without. It never got entrance—never so much as a hair's breadth of foothold or vantage-ground—on the threshold of the Saviour's mind.

It was not, therefore, temptation, as we often understand temptation in reference to ourselves. It was simply a putting to proof. Satan did not, and he could not, induce Jesus to waver one instant on a razor's edge of indecision between the right and the wrong. That would have been to Jesus failure and sin. To shake, to overthrow, the constancy of Jesus in goodness, was what Satan endeavored and hoped. What he succeeded in bringing to pass, was the furnishing to Jesus of supreme opportunity to show himself proof against the tempter's utmost efforts. It was, Luke says, "when the devil had completed every temptation"—that is, had used every resource at his command for putting his antagonist to the test—that he departed from Jesus "for a season."

But we are not to infer that though there was no temptation to Jesus, in the sense of temptation responded to with some inclination on the part of the tempted to yield, there was therefore no struggle, no conflict, to the Son of God in the wilderness. A struggle, an agony, there was, and one indescribably dreadful; the more dreadful that the holiness of the Tempted was such as to make hopeless the success of the tempter. The agony consisted in having to bear the nearness, the conscious contact, the permitted obtrusion, of the Evil One. The Holy One loathed the Evil One with inconceivable loathing; but he had to endure him—had to suffer his ways with himself. It was only by actually overpowering him, in every permitted attempt of his upon himself, that Jesus could rid his hateful enemy away—such was the necessary condition of his office as

Saviour; and then the relief and riddance was but "for a season." Those dreadful encounters with the Evil One thus experienced by Jesus in the desert may well have been in his mind to inspire the petition given by him to his disciples, "Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One." There was a last pathetic echo of the same sentiment in the words of the Sufferer in the garden, then uttered when his "season" of reprieve was over from the visiting of Satan, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."

The great Christian poet, Milton, thought the Temptation a part important enough in the work of Jesus on earth to justify him in making that the sole subject of his poem, the "Paradise Regained"—as if paradise were regained for men by the mere successful resistance of our champion to the efforts put forth by Satan to seduce him from perfect obedience. That is no doubt a view misleading by excess and disproportion. Still the temptation of Jesus is in truth a topic of immeasurable moment. It is of the utmost consequence that we do not make the mistake of thinking vitally wrong about it.

The narrative of it must have come, in the first instance, from the mouth of Jesus himself. No one else knew the facts of the history. Matthew gives us the fullest account of it all, and Matthew was an apostle. There was to him no motive for telling the story otherwise than exactly as he himself was told it. And, for any capital task like this narration, he was promised by Jesus every assistance he needed from that Spirit who should lead the apostles into all truth. The form, therefore, in which the narrative of Scripture exists, is doubtless approximately the same as that in which it issued first from the lips of the Lord. It is not necessary that we should completely understand the story; but it is of the highest importance that we should loyally believe it. Let us not seek to volatilize it away with ingenious ex-

planation. It is far better not to explain, than to explain amiss.

The tempter was a real person—a person of indefinite knowledge, of indefinite cunning, of indefinite power. What he did consisted of real acts; what he “said” consisted of real suggestions intelligibly conveyed. Acts and sayings, both alike, were from without; that is, they did not originate within the mind, or within the imagination, of Jesus. They were not hallucinations; they were not impressions. They were realities of some sort; and realities not self-begotten on the part of Jesus himself. So much is certainly implied in the narrative; unless we explain the narrative in a manner to explain it away. As for the difficulties, magnified or distorted into impossibilities, which the case involves—those perhaps are of our own creating. When we know more than we know now of that world which we call the world of matter, then perhaps what we know—or think we know—we shall know very differently. Jesus once said a deep thing to certain men that raised cavils about what he taught. “Ye do err,” said he, “not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.” Let us not underrate the power of God. And let us not be over-secure that we know the Scriptures; we may, quite un-awares, be explaining them amiss. It is safer sometimes simply to believe. We assuredly shall not share the victory which Jesus achieved, and achieved for us, over the devil, if we fail even to believe that he achieved such a victory. Our partnership with him in it must be a partnership of faith.

We know from Scripture that Jesus was put to proof at all points exactly as his human brethren are. And perhaps every form of temptation that can befall any child of Adam was fairly represented in the threefold test with which Satan was permitted to ply the Saviour in the wilderness. Fleshly lust, spiritual pride, love of the world—what temptation to sin is there that does not

appeal to one or other of these three principles in our sinful human nature? And these three principles are the ones desperately invoked by the tempter, in his three separate assaults upon the invulnerable virtue of the sinless Son of God.

Because Jesus was thus assaulted, he can sympathize with us; because he was vainly thus assaulted, he can bring us effectual succor.

A GLIMPSE OF HIS GLORY

OF what immediately followed the temptation in the wilderness, with the lovely sequel to that, of ministration from angels to the victorious, but exhausted, Son of Man, all that we know is comprised in a few statements furnished us by the Evangelist John alone. These constitute what we might very well call anecdotes. John's anecdotes of Jesus belonging to this moment of his experience are not only charming in themselves, but highly significant. Still, they will have to be passed here with merely note made of the fact that the purport of them all is to give the testimony borne by John the Baptist to the person and office of Jesus. It is very noteworthy that one saying of John, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," points unmistakably to the sacrificial or atoning character of the mission which Jesus was to accomplish on earth. It was the image of a suffering Saviour, and not the image of an all-conquering Lord, that the pathetic symbol of the "Lamb" must have been intended by John, or by the Holy Spirit in John, to raise in the minds of his hearers. This same touching phrase in characterization of Jesus was, it seems, twice used—once on each of two successive days—by the great forerunner. The second time, at least, his testimony fell upon susceptible ears.

Two disciples of John the Baptist heard it, and they followed Jesus. One of the two was Andrew; the other John the Evangelist does not name; but we may assume that it was John himself. Andrew brought his brother Simon to the Lord, who "looked upon him"—significant look no doubt it was, to have been thus noted—and

recognized him. Not, apparently, as having known him before, but as supernaturally first knowing him now. Jesus even called the newcomer by his name; adding the name of his father, John, or Jonah. He at the same time gave him a new name; it was that name by which he has come to be universally known, Peter, or Cephas. "Thou shalt be called Cephas"; a case of prophecy, remarkably fulfilling itself. "Cephas" (Aramaic) means "rock"; "Peter" is the Greek equivalent.

The next day, Jesus "found" Philip, and said to him, "Follow me." Philip was a fellow townsman of the brothers Andrew and Simon. Philip did to a friend of his, Nathanael by name, what Andrew the day before had done to his brother Simon—he brought him to Jesus. Jesus repeated, in the case of Nathanael, the wonder of his immediate identification of Simon—with circumstance, in the later case, to heighten the wonder. Nathanael, who had been very doubtful in coming—"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" he said in reply to Philip's invitation to come and see Jesus—was overwhelmed at once into reverent faith. "Rabbi," he solemnly exclaimed, "thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel." Five of his disciples—five whom Jesus would afterward make apostles—were thus promptly drawn to the side of the Master; five, that is to say, if, as we may suppose, Nathanael was the one also named Bartholomew. These seem all to have come out of the ranks of the disciples of John.

Jesus having now returned to Galilee, an extraordinary display of supernatural, indeed of divine creative, power on the part of Jesus occurred. The manner of the display was as simple, as silent, as beautiful as is that of the daily display of God's creative power in nature. The story, too, is told by John the Evangelist with an effortless ease, an unadorned simplicity, in majestic keeping with the character and manner of the incident itself. Every-

body knows almost by heart John's idyll of the miracle at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. The Evangelist was probably himself present; for with Jesus were bidden also his disciples to the feast.

“And the mother of Jesus was there.” One might almost be tempted to regret, for her own sake, that she was. But, long before John wrote his story, Mary had probably grown willing—more than willing—to let her own errors, whatever these were, appear to all men, in heightening illustration by contrast of the glory of her son and her Master. In not unnatural continuation of the mother's part to a child, Mary ventured on a prompting to Jesus which he thought not fit. What she said may have been a hint to the effect that now was a time for him to exert his miraculous power. Jesus rebuked and repelled her? Why? Not improbably he saw in her words something more than mere ill-timed indulgence in the maternal instinct and habit of suggestion to her son. That lovely, but imperfect, woman was perhaps a little overready to seem in some sort a confidant, a partner, at least by counsel, with the wonderful being that she hoped her son would now presently show himself to all to be. Her friends should be reminded that she, Mary, enjoyed the mother's intimate privilege at the ear of this majestic man.

“Perhaps,” we say. We cannot know. But, for some sufficient reason, Jesus met his mother with a distinct rebuff. He made her understand that in the work of life for him, now to be begun, he had no human partner—not even in his mother. If this passage between Mary and Jesus was an undertone aside, not overheard by any, then it must have been Mary herself who supplied the information respecting it to John. To suppose this would afford a grateful proof of self-abasing humility in Mary attained by her in later life. Was Mary's direction to the servants, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it,” an expedient on her part to save herself

a little in the eyes of observers under the humiliation which she had suffered? She was probably a special friend of the Cana household, as such known to the servants, and she may have meant only to prepare her son's way with them. But this poor human heart of ours! How many are its devices! Mary might, one would think, have assumed that he who could do what she apparently expected Jesus to do, was not less able than she was herself to procure the necessary obedience of the servants.

How did Jesus convert that water into wine? Of course, by introducing into it, in their just proportion, those elements which wine possesses and water does not. But whence did those elements come? And how were they introduced? Were they then and there created, by so much increasing the quantity of those elements existing in the universe? It is not necessary to suppose this; and as it is not necessary, so it is not advisable to suppose it. But could not he who, through visible means, collects the necessary elements from earth and from air and accomplishes this very miracle every year all over the world, collect those elements from earth and from air and accomplish it, if he chose, for that one time at Cana of Galilee, *without* visible means? How idle our doubts and our questions! How much wiser to believe, whenever God speaks, than, in vain conceit of wisdom, to shake our heads and say, 'Impossible!' At how many points are we liable to err, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God"!

John's concluding remark, "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed," sufficiently indicates the object of this miracle. The miracle was a sign. To supply the needed wine was but incidental. That was not the object, but only the occasion. The object was to manifest his glory, in order that his disciples might at

once be confirmed in their faith in Jesus as Messiah—those first five disciples and perhaps no more.

John, looking back through many years—probably forty or fifty at least, from the date of the occurrence to the date of the writing—saw the meaning of all more deeply and more truly than he could see it at the time. That deed of his Lord was now transfigured to John. It was, in the retrospect, as if at Cana that day the incarnate God had for the moment a little withdrawn the veil of humanity which hid his proper character, and let shine through, to a few favored eyes, the brightness of the Father's image which he was.

It was a glimpse of his glory.

XIII

FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM AND BACK

AFTER the miracle at Cana, there occurred what at first blush looks like a removal on Mary's part of her family abode from Nazareth to Capernaum. On Mary's part, we need to say, rather than on Joseph's; for Joseph is not mentioned in connection with the removal, as also he was not mentioned in connection with the marriage at Cana. The probability is that Joseph had died, at some time not long before. Jesus was still reckoned as of the family; so that it was not yet true of him, as it came to be afterward, when he used those touching words concerning himself, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Perhaps, indeed, we should correct ourselves again and call it rather a removal on the part of Jesus, than of Mary; for, as if he, in the character of eldest son, were now the recognized head of the household, the narrative reads: "He went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and there they abode not many days."

The disciples were for the time joined to their Master. Of those disciples; two, John and James, were first cousins to Jesus, if, as seems probable, Salome, their mother, was sister to Mary. Perhaps they all, temporarily at least, composed one family. But "not many days," John says. This reads as if it were rather a visit, than a removal, that is spoken of. At any rate, the present sojourn of Jesus himself at Capernaum was comparatively brief. He will afterward make that city more permanently his place of residence. Meantime there will be a resort on his part to Jerusalem, and a re-

turn, for a short stay only, but memorable, to Nazareth, the home of his infancy, his boyhood, and his youth.

The visit of Jesus to Jerusalem was in observance of the Passover. That visit was to become the occasion of a remarkable—one might almost be tempted to say, an uncharacteristic—demonstration on his part. Those certainly who find in Jesus nothing but gentleness and persuasion, must do so in forgetfulness of what he now did. It was an action on his part which only an inalienable dignity and elevation of character in him could save from seeming violent, to the degree almost of grotesqueness. Indeed so astounding was his procedure on the present occasion, that mere dignity and elevation of character in the actor would only serve to emphasize its excess and eccentricity, if that dignity and elevation of character did not rise to majesty distinctly more than human. What other great personage of history could be imagined entering single-handed a crowded place of public resort, as, for example, a great market, and, with a scourge of cords in his hand made by himself for weapon, driving forth a rout of sheep and oxen, pouring out in confusion heaps of coin belonging to money-changers and overturning their tables—what other great personage of history could be imagined behaving in this way, without our experiencing a sense of something derogated from his proper, dignity?

Eastern ways are, it is true, different from our ways; and we may easily make the mistake of judging this transaction by alien standards not applicable to the case. Whatever is really true as to the degree of eccentricity involved in the conduct of Jesus, it is noteworthy that he met with no active opposition, no challenge, no protest, in his proceeding. Not even was any question apparently raised, until after the fact. Then the Jews took heart of grace to inquire, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" Jesus staggered them, scandalized them indeed, with his reply. His reply

was, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

The Jews had an easy method of disposing of that sign—by simply indicating how impossible it was. The then existing temple was that known as Herod's. Herod the Great had made it the chief monument of his long and magnificent reign. Besides uncounted treasure, he had lavished unstinted time upon its erection. "Forty and six years," the Jews said, "was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"

They had misunderstood him, and they disbelieved. But they would no less have disbelieved, had they understood him right. And even in the sense which they mistakenly put upon his words, he could have made his words true. So that, however his reply might be taken by them, he did them no injustice by his parable. His disciples seem not to have understood him at the time. But they did not disbelieve. And afterward they understood him. The Jews did indeed violate and destroy the sanctuary of that human body belonging to the Lord; and in three days, as he said, he raised it up more glorious than it was before.

"Signs," at the demand of unbelief, it was never the way of Jesus to supply. But during his present stay in Jerusalem, he seems to have given, on occasions not particularly described, many "signs," in the form of what we ordinarily call miracles, in attestation of his office and mission as Messiah. He thus won disciples in considerable numbers. John, in making record of this, adds an affecting, a somewhat saddening, remark. Concerning those disciples (rather those "believers" so-called) won to him by his "signs," the Evangelist says, "he did not trust himself to them." This reserve on the part of Jesus had its source in his knowledge of men. He knew, John says, without being told by any one, "what was in man." And therefore he withheld his trust. *He* did not think it wise to stake himself on the inextinguish-

able nobleness innate in human hearts—even if they were the hearts of those who thought that they “believed on his name.”

It was during this Passover sojourn of Jesus in Jerusalem, that there occurred the famous interview—an interview as famous probably as any that ever occurred between two persons—of Jesus with Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a distinguished man. He had the distinction of important office. He was a “ruler” of the Jews. He might have sent for Jesus to come to him, with hope of having his summons considered an honor by the summoned. But he did not do this. He *came* instead himself to Jesus. Was it a deference intended? Or was it from motives of self-regard? It is noted that his visit was by night. The natural, though not the necessary, supposition is that this was for the purpose of secrecy. Perhaps—nay, probably—the ruler did not wish his visit to be known. Still, it may have been only that he desired to have his interview quiet and uninterrupted.

The opening of conversation, on Nicodemus’s part, was highly respectful, even reverent. It seemed to betoken something very like the full conviction of faith. “Rabbi,” said he, “we know that thou art a teacher sent from God: for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.” Jesus will try his faith; will deepen it, will enlighten it, if it be real. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “The kingdom of God” is an expression evidently familiar to Nicodemus. The idea of it creates no difficulty for him. But that new birth—what does that mean? Manifestly not a second natural birth. Nicodemus virtually puts that interpretation out of the question by his interrogatory reply. He is docile. It is as if he said: ‘I see that you cannot mean birth in the ordinary sense of the word. What is the sense that I am to take?’

Jesus was always ready to teach the teachable spirit.

John's baptism was a topic in everybody's mind just then, and that baptism was connected in everybody's mind with the announced impending kingdom of God. John's baptism might be regarded as a birth of—that is, out of—water. For the baptized person issued from the water in very much the likeness of a birth. But such water-birth alone was not enough. There must accompany that another birth. "Except," said Jesus, "a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jesus had set forth in this teaching to Nicodemus his great fundamental doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of it. Nicodemus's turn of expression, "these signs," indicates that Jesus had speedily become conspicuous at Jerusalem as a worker of miracles. But John relates none of them. He does not write to gratify an appetite for the marvelous.

After the Passover, and after the interview with Nicodemus, Jesus, according to John's Gospel, spent some time, attended by his disciples, in Judea. He there "baptized," it is said; which implies that he did a teacher's work and won followers who were willing to obey him. This Judean sojourn of his brought about one more attestation from John the Baptist to the Messianic character of Jesus.

The Baptizer himself was still pursuing his work. The two baptizers were near enough together for quick exchange of news between their two respective groups of disciples. John's disciples tell their master of the growing popularity of Jesus. But that great, generous heart was joyful to fade away in the new light, as the morning star fades away in the light of the rising sun. "He must increase, but I must decrease," said John, of Jesus in contrast with himself. It seems strange, but the fore-runner and the King do not, so far as the record goes, appear ever to have met for any conversation, except on the one occasion of the baptism of Jesus.

The stay of the Lord in Judea extended only to the

moment when he knew that the envious and hostile Pharisees had heard of his success, surpassing that of John, in winning disciples. He then with his disciples withdrew to Galilee.

Between Judea and Galilee lay Samaria. Strict Jews, going from one region to the other, would make a circuit rather than pass through this detested land. But Jesus took Samaria in his way. So doing, he reached the city of Sychar, now called Nablous, one day about noon. It was an historic spot. There was a well here called Jacob's well, as having belonged to that patriarch. The open shaft still exists, but it is now almost or quite without water. Tourists visit it in great numbers every year; and it is natural for them to wonder that the well should ever have been dug in a place where water much more easily obtainable was nigh at hand in full supply. The fact probably is that Jacob, who was a man of peace, provided himself thus with water at so much cost of labor and trouble, in order to avoid occasion of strife with some that laid prior, and perhaps exclusive, claim to the more convenient natural sources.

Jesus was weary, and he sat down by the well to rest. A woman from the town came out, led apparently by some preference for this particular water, to supply herself from Jacob's well. Jesus accosted her and asked for a drink. The woman was surprised. She saw that the stranger was a Jew, and she had expected to be treated by him as Samaritans generally were treated by Jews—that is, with reserve at least, if not with scorn. She expressed her amazement.

But she was destined to be more amazed. Jesus said: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." The disciples of Jesus, with the possible exception of John, from whom we have this whole story, had gone into the city to buy food.

Like Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman showed readiness to learn. She divined a deep meaning in the stranger's words, and asked to have it brought out. Yet she asked, with some reserve of hesitation, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" Her thought seemed to be: 'Jacob was satisfied with the water of this well; hast thou something better to offer?' Jesus pointed out that the water of Jacob's well slaked thirst only for a time; whereas the water of which he spoke was a fountain in the spirit never failing and forever forestalling thirst.

The woman was prompt to ask for this desirable water.

Jesus seemed to put her off with his reply; but he in reality was preparing her to receive what he had to bestow. "Go, call thy husband, and come hither," he said. She answered shortly, "I have no husband." Jesus then showed her that he knew the facts of her history. These were remarkable enough. She had had five husbands; and she was living now an adulterous life with a man not her husband. She winced apparently to have the shameful truth exposed. She would change the subject:

With complimentary recognition of a prophetic character in this stranger, she would set him talking on a controverted point, which doubtless he could treat at last with something like finality. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet," the woman complaisantly said. "Now, our Samaritan fathers worshiped in this mountain. But you Jews hold that Jerusalem is the right place for worship." It was as if she had added: 'I should like to hear thy views and reasons on this subject.' The Samaritans were in part a purely heathen, in part a mixed Israelitish and heathen, stock—in the latter case, fruit of an amalgamation that occurred as result of the Babylonian captivity, a remnant of Israel left behind in the land coalescing with a colony of Assyrians sent out to repeople the waste region of what had been

known as Samaria. Hence the Samaritans, so called, of Jesus' time. They themselves claimed to be true children of Israel.

The woman's tactics did not succeed exactly to her mind; but her success was really far greater than she guessed. Jesus at first seemed to brush aside the question of difference between Jewish and Samaritan ideas, as a matter not worth discussing. "Woman," said he, "believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father." It was a solemn glance forward—of course not fully, if at all, understood by the woman—to the historic destruction, now already impending, of Jerusalem and of the temple at Jerusalem, involving also, perhaps, the overthrow of the Samaritan worship. But the Lord will at the same time be faithful to the truth concerned. He stands squarely for the Jewish against the Samaritan claim. He says: "Ye worship that which ye know not; we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews."

Still, the great general doctrine of worship independent of place and of form, the doctrine of pure spiritual worship, is what the Lord chiefly insists upon. The woman shows now more plainly the quality in her which made it seem fit to Jesus, who from the first had discovered it, to lavish so rich an instruction on so apparently unpromising an audience as was this poor sinful woman. A chord was touched in her soul that vibrated in response. "I know," said she, "that Messiah cometh; when he is come, he will declare unto us all things." Her ears were opened, her heart was ready, and Jesus delayed no longer to disclose himself. "I that speak unto thee am he," were his words in reply.

At this moment his disciples come up. They had returned from their errand to the neighboring town, whither they had gone to buy bread. They wondered that their Master was talking with a woman; but something kept them from questioning either him or her. The woman

was overwhelmed with sudden conviction. She forgot her thirst, or at least her need of provision against future thirst; for she left her waterpot and hastened away back into the city. There she excitedly cried out to everybody she met, so it would seem, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Can this be the Christ?"

There was an accent of truth in her words and her manner that won belief. A curious crowd began to stream forth from the town toward Jacob's well. The disciples meanwhile begged Jesus to eat. But he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not." The disciples were perplexed in doubt of his meaning. They asked one another, "Has any one been bringing him food?" Jesus was aware of what they were wondering, and he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." He added: "Say not ye, there are four months, and then cometh the harvest?" This may indicate the season of the year when the incident at Jacob's well occurred, that is, late autumn or early winter; but perhaps, on the other hand, Christ's language was in the nature of a proverb. At any rate, pointing no doubt his disciples toward the stream of people approaching from the city, he said, in a striking metaphor, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." The inhabitants of Sychar were in so far worthy that they begged Jesus to tarry among them; and he did so two days, with the result that many were brought to believe on him as "the Saviour of the world."

Jesus, having taken his departure from Sychar, and having now got on as far as Cana in Galilee, was there met by a man who was a personage of consequence in Capernaum. It appears that the signs wrought by the Lord at Jerusalem had spread his fame far and wide throughout the whole land. The Galileans were many of

them present in that city at the feast, and they, returning homeward, bore wherever they went the wonderful news of what Jesus had done in Jerusalem. It thus happened that this Capernaum gentleman, in a case of domestic distress that had befallen him, had faith that Jesus could relieve him. His son was at the point of death. Would not Jesus heal him? But Jesus, with use of the plural number, "ye," in his pronoun, merging this applicant with the generality of his countrymen, said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The father simply answered, "Sir, come down ere my child die." That pathetic appeal was profession enough of faith. Jesus would not longer put off the piteous plea.

But in answering it, he gave the faith of the father another chance, a harder one, to prove itself. Jesus did not start to come; he did not so much as say, "I will come." Instead, he bade the father go his way, assuring him only that his son should live. The father was equal to the test. He believed; and, returning, was met on his way by messengers sent to relieve him of his anxiety with news that his son was getting well. The moment of the change for the better in the patient's condition coincided accurately, the grateful father found, with the moment of his receiving those reassuring words from Jesus.

To Nazareth once more. But will Nazareth prove worthy? "He came to his own, and his own received him not." One may imagine that he who was Son of Man as well as Son of God returned to Nazareth, "where he had been brought up," with peculiar emotions. He had gone away from there an obscure youth, Joseph's son; he returned illustrious, with the fame of his many wonderful works done at Jerusalem surrounding and forerunning him. What would his townfolk say? What would now be their attitude toward him?

Would they recognize him in his new character? Would they welcome him as prophet, as Messiah?

He went on the Sabbath Day into the synagogue. This had been his custom, as everybody knew, but now he stood up to read. Perhaps he had done the same thing before; he had never before done it in quite the same way. There was handed to him the manuscript roll containing the prophecy of Isaiah. He unrolled it and lighted upon a remarkable Scripture. It read:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

The effect was striking. When Jesus, having rolled up the manuscript and handed it back to the attendant, took his seat, “the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him”—“were fastened on *him*,” perhaps we should read. There may have been obscurely felt some singular correspondence between the person and character of the reader and the terms of the passage of prophecy that he had read.

The first sentence only is given of the discourse that followed. That sentence scarcely did more than put into words the thought that probably had already been half expressed by the aspect and action of the speaker as he read the verses from Isaiah. “To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears,” said Jesus. That is, ‘Your ears have just heard the voice of the one prophesied of by Isaiah as sent to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’ The Nazarenes listened with wonder at the words they heard.

With wonder; and yet with unbelief. For Jesus so interprets their spirit. He says, in effect: ‘I know what you are thinking. You are thinking, Let Jesus do things

here at home like what they say he has done in Capernaum. But no prophet is recognized and acknowledged by his own neighbors. Elijah, in the famine, was sent outside of Israel, full of widows as Israel was, to help a needy heathen widow. Elisha passed over the many lepers in Israel, to heal a single Syrian leper, Naaman.' Those discriminations on God's part, made in former times, it was of course his sovereign right to make, irrespective of individual desert. But the implication of Jesus is that, had their own fellow countrymen been worthy, those prophets of old would not have been sent in preference among aliens and foreigners to dispense the favors of God.

It was a hint from Jesus to his fellow Nazarenes. Would they take it? Would they burst out with believing and obedient acclamations of: 'Nay, but we will show ourselves different from our unworthy forefathers. We will accept our prophet. We hail thee now for what thou art, for what thou hast shown thyself to be.' If, instead of murmuring their incredulous question, "Is not this Joseph's son?" they had, in grateful faith like the Capernaum nobleman's, brought their sick to Jesus to be healed, there is no reason to think that Jesus would have denied them their desire. That nobleman had been tried virtually in the same way with them. Jesus had said to him, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will in no wise believe." If only the Nazarenes would bear the test as that nobleman did!

Alas, but no! The men who had just wondered at the words of grace from Jesus proved themselves now unequal to their opportunity. They were enraged at the idea of a discrimination against themselves made in favor of their rivals in Capernaum. It seems almost incredible, but it was quite in character for those inflammable Jews—they rose in mass; they hustled Jesus violently out of the synagogue; they hurried him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built—the exact spot, by the way.

is not now easy to identify—with the murderous purpose of thence hurling him headlong down.

That murderous purpose was mysteriously balked. There came a moment when the power of the mob—up to that point unresisted, seemingly irresistible—suddenly failed, failed utterly, no one could have told, or only One could have told, how, or why. Jesus, “passing through the midst of them, went his way.” How majestically it was done! No antagonistic violence, no outcry, no demonstration of any sort. It was not escape. It was not elusion. No cloud enveloped him. He was not caught up and borne away. He simply passed through the midst of them and went on. Whither? Probably to Capernaum. For Matthew tells us that leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capernaum. That city will henceforth be more than any other place his home.

Nazareth had missed to know the day of her visitation!

XIV

AT CAPERNAUM AND THENCE ROUND ABOUT

THE contrast between Nazareth and Capernaum, in respect of welcome to Jesus, was great. And yet Capernaum—she too, with other cities like herself in being scenes of mighty miracle wrought by Christ—will in the end become the object of dreadful reprobation from his mouth, and of solemn prophecy (prophecy long since fulfilled) of dreadful doom. But meantime there succeeds a period of apparent prosperity to Jesus, in a round of preaching and beneficence accomplished by him from Capernaum as a center.

Four at least of those five disciples found by Jesus at the place of the baptism after his experience in the wilderness of temptation, were by vocation fishermen. These men, upon their return with Jesus from Judea to Galilee, seem to have gone back to their former, probably ancestral, employment with the fishing-net. Jesus now, walking by the lakeside, finds two of them there, with their boats drawn up on shore. The Master was deeply engaged in speaking to the multitudes that thronged him as he went along. He asked Simon to let him occupy one of his boats as a standing-place—a sitting-place rather—from which to speak to the people. And would Simon Peter kindly put out a little into the lake, that his Master might the better command his audience gathered on the shore? Simon did so, and Jesus sitting there taught the listening throngs.

It was a charming picture; but the seriousness of it made it something more, something other, something higher, than merely charming. The lake Gennesaret, or Sea of Galilee, is a lovely sheet of water. The water it-

self is sparkingly clear, and, on one side, at intervals along the border, a pebbly and sandy beach slopes gently down to the water's edge; while across the breadth of the lake, about six miles in measure, is seen a range of high hills extending its whole length, and, when the rays of the sun fall right, seeming to beetle over upon the shadowed surface underneath.

Behind you, as, standing on the high ground that rises a little way back from the margin of the lake, you face those opposite eastern hills, are swells of grassy upland retreating into the interior, and with their flocks and herds composing a pastoral landscape once no doubt as fair as the eye could desire to rest upon. The hum of population and the picturesque, lowly, flat-roofed houses, showing sheeny-white amid embowered green along the shore, enlivened the scene with that human interest without which the aspects of nature, however beautiful, soon cease to satisfy the social human heart. An idyll such as romancers of the life of Jesus have, sometimes too light-heartedly, painted it—an idyll indeed were the scene and the history alike, save that a shadow of tragedy overcasts it all, reflected backward from the end that was to be, and so soon, in Gethsemane and on Calvary.

When that day's outdoor preaching was done, Jesus had a surprise for the brothers Simon and Andrew. "Put out into the deep," said he to Simon, "and let down your nets for a draught." Simon would do as he was bidden; but he deemed it right to assure Jesus that the prospect of success was poor. They had toiled all night, he said, with no catch whatever. Peter seems not to have delayed complying with his Master's word while he made this explanation; though it would not have been strange, had the brothers been a little slack-handed at first in letting down their nets.

If they indeed were so, they had immediate occasion to change their attitude both of mind and of body and

brace themselves to the business in hand. For the finny inhabitants of the lake hastened with such an impetus of number into the nets spread for them that the weight and momentum were like to break the meshes. The astonished and now anxious brothers summoned to their help their partners in the other boat. Two boat-loads of fishes were the reward of that obedience on the part of Simon. The boats, indeed, almost foundered with their heavy lading.

It was quite too much for Simon Peter, with his susceptible heart. He fell down at Jesus' feet and prayed a prayer which, happily for him who prayed it, Jesus did not answer literally. "Depart from me," cried Peter, beside himself; but *so* beside himself that his Master heard him for what he meant and not for what he said. Peter was overwhelmed into a sudden conviction of sin. "Depart from me," he exclaimed, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord." That was the uppermost thought of Peter's heart. And that confession made it impossible for the Lord to depart from him.

No wonder Peter was "amazed." No wonder the amazement flooded over them all. James and John, their partners, were involved in it. And no wonder that at Jesus' bidding, they having first got their boats safely to land, the four men forsook all and followed Jesus. This second call to them meant abandonment of their former occupation. They were thenceforth to be otherwise employed. How employed the Lord indicated, when, on this very occasion, he said to them, in pithy, homely phrase, racy of the "sea," "I will make you fishers of men."

Jesus first went with his disciples into Capernaum. There he entered the synagogue and taught. Of course it was the Sabbath Day. The hearers noticed how different was this man's tone in teaching from the tone of the scribes. The scribes quoted other men, they weighed

this opinion against that, they made fine distinctions, they hesitated, they left their hearers ultimately in doubt. Jesus taught with authority. He did not say, Perhaps. He said, Verily.

While he was thus teaching, a startling incident occurred in the synagogue. Jesus had a certain hearer there ('certain hearers,' possibly we should say), who knew him better than did the rest of those present. This hearer had secured for himself a lodgment in which he was invisible. It was lodgment within a human breast. A man had been seized and forced against his will to give this alien hearer quarters inside himself. It was a hideous invasion and usurpation. For the invader and usurper was a demon from the abyss.

Out burst on the ears of all a sudden and alarming cry. "What have we to do with thee," such were the words, "what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God." The cry issued from the lips of the man that had been invaded and usurped by the demon. It was the demon's cry with the man's voice. It was a cry of panic and of agony. It was perhaps wrung from the demon, as it were against his own will, not less than against the will of the man. The nearness of Jesus may have compelled the demon thus to cry. Or perhaps it was a desperate device, on the demon's part, to discredit Jesus; ostensible attestation impudently rendered from such a quarter might well be supposed to discredit any person or any thing that was the object of it.

At any rate, the attestation was unwelcome to Jesus. He bade the demon hold his peace and come out of the man. The poor victim of this possession was not relieved without first suffering pangs of deliverance. His evil inmate came out, but he tore his way out, at the same time uttering, still with the man's voice, demoniac yells. The peo-

ple in the synagogue were amazed; as well they might be. "A new teaching!" they exclaimed. "With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits and they obey him." The fame of what had happened went like the wind forth into every part of Galilee.

Such an affection of the human soul as demoniac possession is of course a mystery. It is part of the mystery of evil and of sin. Not indeed primarily that it is so difficult to understand how an inhabitant from hell may, if permitted from on high, take up lodgment, along with the man himself, in a human bosom. That, to be sure, is difficult to understand. But equally difficult it is, when we think of it, to understand how *one* spirit (the man's own even) can be lodged within a body of flesh. Why not two spirits as easily as one? Nay, why not a legion? There is no more impossibility, no more difficulty, in the plural case than in the singular. We are familiar with the fact of one spirit lodged in the body. The Jews of Jesus' time were familiar with the fact—the occasional fact—of more than one. That is the simple truth. The difficulty involved is not the difficulty of understanding the mode of the fact. The real difficulty is all in understanding how God could permit the fact in any mode. But then how could God permit sin? There is nothing for us but to bow and say: "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good."

Many other instances of encounter on the part of Jesus with demons in possession of men and women, occurred subsequently in the course of his career. It was natural that One whose mission in the world was to destroy the works of the devil, should be confronted by that adversary, not only in his own person, as in the wilderness, but also in the persons of his emissary demons, spawned upward into the world from the abyss. This consideration sufficiently accounts for the swarming incursions of evil spirits from hell into this mundane

sphere, occurring at the time and in the place of Christ's advent and activity. The apostle Paul warns us to be not ignorant of the devil's devices. And one of his favorite devices, one of the most successful and most dangerous of them all, is the device of what we may call a universal *alibi*—the trick, that is to say, of pretending not to be at all. Let once that falsehood be imposed upon men, Satan can work with all freedom, as unsuspected.

Out of the synagogue into the house of his disciple Simon, was the next movement of the Lord. There lay a sick woman, the victim of a fever—an alarming fever. It was the mother of Simon's wife. They interceded on her behalf with Jesus. Jesus "stood over her"—what a benediction was that leaning form!—and "rebuked the fever." So Luke, the physician, describes what Jesus did. The other Evangelists say that he "touched" her hand; one, that he "raised her up," as if with his hand. They all say that the fever left her, and that she then "ministered unto them." "Unto *him*," Matthew says; which no doubt indicates that, as would be the natural instinct of love, of gratitude, and of reverence, she made her Healer the special object of her ministering attention.

The Sabbath evening drew on, and the house of Simon stood a siege such as no human dwelling ever stood before. People brought demoniacs to it in great numbers; they brought all the sick of Capernaum, a motley and miserable throng; in short, "the whole city," as Mark strongly states it, "was gathered together at the door." The sick he healed, not, as it seems, in masses; but with those blessed hands of his laid individually "on every one of them." "With a word," Matthew tells us, he cast out the demons from their robber-haunts in human bosoms. Those wretched, wicked beings cried out upon him, as they obeyed his irresistible word. They said, "Thou art the Son of God!" Strange malice theirs,

to testify thus to his true character! But Jesus forbade them; and for a reason that at first seems strange—it was that they knew him to be the Christ.

He was not ready yet to be proclaimed abroad in his Messianic office; or he did not wish to be *so* proclaimed. We know that the unbelieving Jews in fact charged it upon him that he cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. Perhaps such testimony to him as that which he this day forbade, was subtly meant by Satan to suggest collusion with himself on Jesus' part. It is to be noted that all this concourse of people desiring relief took place as the sun was setting. The Sabbath then was ended, and, besides that, the fervors of the Syrian sun were overpast for the day.

The next morning Jesus rose very early, indeed before it was fairly day, and went out into the open air. He went alone, and he sought a solitary place. He there prayed. The extraordinary occurrences of the day preceding were, we may well suppose, not without extraordinary cost to the Son of God, who was also, let us bear ever in mind, the Son of Man. His puttings forth of virtue had in some sort exhausted him; and there was one way, one way only, of replenishment. He must pray. And did it not belong to his human nature to need a steadying, a tranquilizing, a restoring, interval of contact through prayer with the great peace of God, after the perturbations, the agitations, of spirit which must have been the day before reflected upon himself from his own triumphantly successful exertions of power against the kingdom of evil? Simon and others had a reason for seeking the Lord in his retirement. The house, it seems, was besieged again, as it had been the previous evening. Indeed, not only Simon, with a few friends of his, but crowds of people surged like a tide of the sea into the place whither Jesus had retired. Most naturally the citizens of the town desired to keep

Jesus in Capernaum. But his purpose was calm, and firm, and clear. He had put himself afresh into conscious communion with God, and he knew, from the highest source of knowledge, what it became him to do. He said: "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for therefore was I sent."

So from Capernaum Jesus went forth throughout all Galilee, teaching and preaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick. His fame swept the land like a conflagration that could not be stayed. He was obliged to cease visiting cities, so unmanageable grew the crowds; he went apart into uninhabited places. But the throngs found him out even there—such was the popular eagerness to hear him, and such the faith of the sick that he could heal them.

The "teaching and preaching" seem to be first in the purpose of Jesus, the healing works second. So also the people, on their side, respond with appetite for hearing, not less marked—perhaps more marked—than their desire for physical good. Luke says, in an order of mention that deserves to be noted, "Great multitudes came together to *hear* and to be healed of their infirmities." Jesus, in speaking himself at this time of his mission, does not allude at all to his works of beneficence; but only to his teaching and preaching. It was spiritual good chiefly that he felt himself called to dispense; temporal good, only as incidental and tributary to that.

The incidents related by the Evangelists of this tour of the Saviour in Galilee are all of them so interesting, that it is difficult to omit any of them here. Returning, perhaps for an interval of needed repose, to Capernaum, he was yet again besieged in his house; this time by throngs of people more numerous apparently than ever before. "And he spoke the word unto them."

One man was present that day whose case was peculiar. He was palsied. His friends brought him stretched

on a bed. Alas, there was no chance for one so helpless, and one needing so much room, to get even near the door! The crowd was impenetrable. But those four friends of his were not so easily beaten. They climbed with him to the roof of the house (perhaps reaching it by a passage from roof to roof of neighboring houses closely adjoined), and, making for themselves a kind of trap-doorway in the roof they had reached, they let down the poor palsied man on his bed into the midst before Jesus. It was an eloquent, an irresistible, appeal of faith.

It is not expressly said that the sick man's errand was to be healed. We are permitted to suppose that his chief motive may have been a spiritual one, to hear the word of God. This would account for the unexpected, the extraordinary, way in which Jesus met him. Jesus said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." (Consider what must have been the sense on Jesus' part of transcendent superiority in himself, to justify or to prompt that young Galilean's addressing a man very probably his own senior in age by the affectionate word, "Son"!) True, it is explained by the Evangelists that the Saviour was thus graciously inclined as "seeing their faith." There was faith then on the part of those who brought the sick man, as well as faith on the part of the sick man himself. But the blessing was to him, and it was the spiritual blessing of forgiveness for his sins. Of course there must have been discerned by Jesus in the man a fitness to receive this blessing.

But the spirit excited in certain observers present was one of criticism rather than of sympathy. Those observers were scribes and Pharisees. Some of them had come from far; some even from as far as Jerusalem. They were probably official observers—spies and informers in fact. They perhaps said nothing, they perhaps guarded even their looks; but Jesus saw what was going on in their hearts. 'Why does this man thus speak?'

they were saying to themselves; 'he blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

"Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" Jesus said to them, with a sureness of aim which must have filled them with surprise. Jesus had ready a method of meeting their cavils. "Which is easier," he asked, "to say to a man sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" In the immediate presence of a man imprisoned, as that man was, in a body to all purposes of voluntary motion dead, the question had the force of demonstration. Whoever could release that man's body from the bonds of palsy, could release that man's soul from the bonds of sin.

Now, it is not told that the palsied man expected or sought any blessing beyond that which he had already received. But he must have listened to that question from Jesus with a strange agitation of hope. Was he to be healed as well as forgiven? Healed in body, as he had been healed in soul? He had not long to wait in pleased suspense. He heard further sounds that shot through his withered members a long-forgotten thrill of life. They were these words from the lips of Jesus: "Arise,"—the sick man, of course, knew that the words were spoken to him—"Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

The eager obedience seemed to forerun the bidding. However much the poor delighted man may have wished to linger in the presence of his Saviour, he had no impulse but to do as he was told. He rose, he took up his bed, which perhaps consisted of little more than a blanket or two, and walked out before them all. There had been difficulty of ingress for him, but there would be no difficulty of egress for a man healed as that man had been. Awe on the part of all would open the way before him through the press. "So from amid them forth he passed." He went "glorifying God." One would like to have heard his exclamations of joy and

thanksgiving as he walked along! Amazement took hold of all that were there; amazement mingled with fear. "We have seen strange things to-day," they said.

One more incident, an important one, and our story of this little section of the Saviour's brief, laborious life is done. Jesus again walking by the lake, again drew about him crowds of eager listeners to his discourse. He seems to have talked as he walked. Thus walking and talking, he passed by a place where taxes were paid. A "receipt of custom," our old familiar Bible calls it. Here sat a man whose business was that of tax-gatherer, or of "publican," as the Bible otherwise names such an official of the Roman government. Very unpopular the followers of this business naturally were, especially if they were Jews. They then seemed to be renegades, as well as oppressors, wringing from their own brethren taxes for those brethren's foreign masters. Of this peculiarly odious class was the man now in question. Matthew his name was, but he was also called Levi.

Jesus would almost seem to have taken delight in surprising men, in scandalizing them, in acting directly in the teeth of their natural expectations. He now said to publican Matthew, "Follow me!" So far as from the narrative itself appears, this was in no special way prepared for. Nothing more is reported as said by Jesus than just the two words, "Follow me." Matthew, on his part, is not recorded to have made any reply in words. From such silence, however, in the narrative, it is not to be with confidence inferred that the interview between Jesus and Matthew was as abrupt and as brief as in the Gospel account it appears. Matthew's place of residence and employment was where he could hardly have failed to become familiar with the claims and the teaching of Jesus. He was already perhaps, when he received this decisive call, an undeclared disciple of the Lord. At any rate, now he arose, forsook all, and followed Jesus.

The incident of the calling of Matthew drew after it a sequel. Matthew appears to have been a man of substance. He made his Master a great feast in his house. It is a curious fashion in the East for the general uninvited public to enjoy the freedom, on such festival occasions, of being present as interested spectators, although not partakers, of the cheer. But at this banquet, besides the multitude of such, made up from classes of persons not in high social esteem, there were many invited guests too that Jews of condition would look down upon as "publicans and sinners."

Jesus' presence in such a company was a fresh scandal to the critical scribes and Pharisees. "Your Master eats with publicans and sinners," they murmured to his disciples. Jesus himself answered on behalf of his disciples, in those memorable words of his: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

If we are right in placing as we do the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in the beginning of the following chapter, the arduous and eventful first great preaching tour of Jesus in Galilee was interrupted by the episode of that visit.

XV

'AT JERUSALEM AGAIN

IT is right to say that some good authorities place quite differently this visit of the Lord to Jerusalem. The time of it cannot be fixed with certainty. A feast drew him thither. What feast? No one knows. Some make it the feast of Purim. This feast was a joyous one; not religious, as were most of the other feasts of the Jews; a feast kept in commemoration of the great national deliverance from utter extinction, experienced in the time of Esther. Other careful students think the feast was a Passover. The choice perhaps lies between these two views; though arguments are adduced in favor of several other feasts.

John alone among the Evangelists makes distinct mention of this visit of Jesus to Jerusalem. He mentions it for the sake of reporting one incident in particular by which it was marked, interesting and significant in itself, but more memorable still as giving occasion to certain sayings of Jesus to be ranked among the profoundest and most characteristic of all that ever fell from his lips. The incident now referred to is the following:

One of the pools or reservoirs of water with which Jerusalem abounded, perhaps beyond any other city ancient or modern in the world, bore the musical name of Bethesda. This pool seems to have been covered with a pavilion; at least, it is said to have had five porches—structures here probably to be conceived of as belonging to an edifice in the nature of a pavilion—erected over the pool for shelter to those visiting it against the heat and light of the sun.

In these porches lay a multitude of persons, sick, blind,

halt, withered. Any one who has visited an Eastern country can easily imagine the distressful scene. Among the sufferers there was one man in a case peculiarly pitiable. His infirmity was one of thirty-eight years' standing. Jesus saw him lying there helpless and hopeless, and he had pity on him. "Wouldst thou be made whole?" said he. 'Sir,' the man replied, 'I have no one to help me down into the water at the right moment. I start when the water begins to stir, but some one else quicker than I always steps in before me.'

The pool may have been fed from a spring subject to intermittent agitations from interior causes, like, for example, the escape of gas of some sort generated underneath. The explanation given in our old Bible to the effect that an angel came down at intervals to trouble the pool, is now considered by all good scholars to be an interpolation in the text—something, that is to say, not belonging to the Gospel as John wrote it. The sick man shows no sign of expecting any help from Jesus. He does not even manifest curiosity. Much less does he exhibit faith. But Jesus, with apparent abruptness, says to him, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." Healing followed instantly, and, upon healing, obedience; for he took up his bed and walked. He was presently to be given a chance to show whether or not he had that best kind of faith, the faith that would feel neither fear nor shame in consequence of having obeyed.

It was the Sabbath when the incident took place. And the incident had a sequel. For the Jews saw the man carrying his bed, and they challenged him. "Thou art breaking the Sabbath," they said. The man answered them, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk." Fairly good warrant for his behavior, one would say. But the Jews seemed not to think so. Their next question was—not, Who healed thee? but—"Who is the man that told thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?"

The man could not tell, for he did not know. He had obeyed without knowing whom he obeyed. And Jesus meantime had passed out of his sight among the thronging multitude. Afterward, the same day probably, Jesus found the man—not, was found by the man—in the temple. There Jesus spoke to him. “Behold,” said he, “thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee.” Whether this imported that the man’s disease was due to some sinful indulgence on his part, we cannot know, and it is idle to conjecture.

The man somehow learned now that his healer was none other than the celebrated Jesus of Nazareth. He went and told “the Jews,” by which expression we are here, as elsewhere generally with John, to understand the Jewish rulers. He perhaps felt pleased at the distinction of being healed by the man who at the moment was everywhere talked about. In his simplicity, he may have supposed that the Jews would themselves now be won over. On the contrary, they assailed Jesus bitterly. They were offended because he did these things on the Sabbath Day.

But Jesus answered them to their yet greater offense. “My Father worketh,” he said, “even until now, and I work.” August and awful association of himself with God! It would either overawe the Jews, or it would incense them. It incensed them. They were mad against him, even to the point of murder. He not only broke the Sabbath, but he called God in a peculiar sense “his own” Father, “making himself equal with God.”

Why should this claim on Jesus’ part have been such a mortal offense to the ruling Jews? The offense of it lay in its threatening to be so profoundly and so widely acknowledged by the people. Jesus was breaking down their own—the rulers’—authority. He was carrying away the nation from themselves. What he was gaining they were losing. He was in the way of being popularly accepted for what he claimed to be. Should that come to pass, there would be an immediate end of their own in-

fluence and high consideration in the Jewish world. It was, as we know from the express statement of John, this spirit of "envy" in them that led finally to the arrest, condemnation, and crucifixion of Jesus.

It is a special feature—indeed a characteristic feature—of John's narrative that it incorporates somewhat more at large than do the narratives of the other Evangelists difficult discourses of Jesus, together with certain passages of sustained controversy arising between himself and the unbelieving Jews. On the present occasion, the Lord exasperates his enemies by putting forth claims for himself that grow more, rather than less, in degree as they are challenged and rejected. 'You plot against me,' he in effect says, 'because I healed a man on the Sabbath. That was an exercise of power on my part very insignificant in comparison with what I shall yet effect. I have healed with a word'; "Verily, verily," he added, "I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Then, as if he saw rejection written on the faces before him of his enemies, he spoke to that spirit in their hearts: "Marvel not at this; for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment."

The higher towered the wrath of his hearers, the more this speaker supplied his hearers to be occasion to them of wrath. He refers to the deputation of inquiry concerning John the Baptist that they had sent to John the Baptist himself: "Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth. But the witness which I receive is not from man." Then, for one moment, the stern judicial tone relaxes and relents. "I say these things," he tenderly assures them, "that ye may be saved. He [John the Baptist] was the lamp that burneth and

shineth; and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light. But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me."

It is sometimes said nowadays, even by Christian teachers, that miracles, so-called, are a burden to Christianity. The founder of Christianity at least did not in his day consider them such. To his own wonderful works (that is, miracles)—his wonderful *works*, observe, not his wonderful *words*—Jesus here makes confident appeal as sufficing proof of his own divine mission. As evidence, miracles may no longer be necessary; but as historic facts they are not to be explained away.

There was something, apparently, in his hearers' demonstrative expression of countenance that indicated their obstinate unbelief. Jesus resumes a grieved, and at length an indignant, and denouncing, tone. "Ye will not come to me," he said, "that ye may have life. . . I know you that you have not the love of God in yourselves, . . . How can ye believe?"

The breach was final and complete between the ruling Jews and Jesus. Jesus will now presently, for the time at least, shake off the dust of his feet against rejecting Jerusalem, and return to Galilee.

One or two striking incidents, however, related by the three other Evangelists, and not by John, belong perhaps to this part of the history. It was the Sabbath Day again, and Jesus, with his disciples, was walking through the fields of ripening wheat. (This we may suppose to have been at some point on the return way from Jerusalem to Galilee; or it may have been near Capernaum, after the arrival there.) There would naturally, according to the usage of the country, be here and there trodden paths never broken up by the plow, traversing

such fields of grain. These paths would, by immemorial prescription, be open and free to the public. The disciples, being hungry, plucked off ears of wheat, and, with their hands rubbing them free of their husks, ate the grain as they went along on those public trodden ways through the wheat. This also would be quite in accordance with the manners of the country. No one would criticize such a proceeding as in itself unlawful or improper.

But that it should be done on the Sabbath Day—that the Pharisees complained of. Jesus answered them with instances out of Scripture. Did not David once in a case of need eat the shewbread—David with his companions? And do not the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath without blame? “But I say unto you, that one greater than the temple is here. . . The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; so that the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

This language of high assumption on the part of Jesus, instead of abolishing the Sabbath, ordains the Sabbath anew. It is not a national, it is not a temporary, institution. It was made for *man*. As long as man exists the Sabbath exists for him. But he who made the Sabbath—not, be it observed, he for whom the Sabbath was made—is lord even of so sacred, so inviolable, a thing as that.

Yet another Sabbath Day, and now a synagogue scene once more—most likely in Capernaum, at which place Jesus, we may assume, had by this time arrived. Jesus was teaching. A man sat before him whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were in waiting, not to hear the word of God, but to see whether Jesus would break the Sabbath again. They were watchfully making up an indictment against him. Jesus knew their thoughts, and he treated them accordingly—after his manner. That manner was never to conciliate an

obdurate enemy of the truth. It was a practice noteworthy frequent with Jesus to meet opposition in a way to inflame it rather than to placate it. Of course, his object was not to produce this hostile result. His object was simply to bear witness to the truth. If his hearers were of the truth, they would hear his voice. It was always within their choice to resist or to yield. But at all events *he* must abide faithful. He could not deny himself. He would not, he could not, abate one jot or tittle of his claim.

On the present occasion, he furnished his enemies what they wanted, which was matter of accusation against him. He did this, and he did more. He accompanied his action with words addressed to them that additionally excited their anger. But first, to the man with his right hand withered he said, "Rise up, and stand forth in the midst." Another case like one preceding: this man also had, so far as may be learned from the record, done nothing, said nothing, to exhibit faith, or to indicate even a thought on his part of being healed. But he was ready to obey, and he obeyed. He rose and stood forth in the midst. There he was, in plain sight of all. What was done should be done openly—no chance of doubt or gain-saying.

One can imagine the hush of expectancy, the tension of eyes to see all that might happen. The man thus standing, all eyes vibrating to and fro between him and the Master, Jesus speaks; but it is not to the man. It is to "them," that is, to the spies and informers present there. He says, "I ask you, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good or to do harm?" This was a retort, a telling one. The Jews had asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" Jesus will transfix them with a perfectly just, but to them a fatal, alternative. He in effect asks: 'Which of us, you or I, can more fairly be charged with now breaking the sabbath? You are plotting to destroy my life. I, you think, am on the

point of making this man's life more complete. Tell me, which is lawful on the sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?'

It must have been a trying moment for those convicted—self-convicted—hypocrites and murderers; a moment made more trying by being prolonged. For Jesus paused—a pause with weight in it like the weight of a millstone. The pause was still more oppressive by virtue of the gesture of Jesus. Jesus "looked round about on them all." That look! Mark says he looked "with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts."

Then he said to the man in his helpless, but no doubt awed, as obedient, suspense, "Stretch forth thy hand!" A yet harder test of his faith! Will he obey? For can he? He can, for he will. His hand was withered, but he "stretched it forth, and behold it was restored whole as the other." Nothing is told us of the subsequent behavior of the man. He is not the center of the present narrative interest. That center consists of the enemies of Jesus. They, alas, instead of being willingly convinced and ashamed, "were filled with madness." They consulted one with another what they might do to Jesus.

But Jesus' hour has not yet come for suffering the extreme outrage at their hands.

XVI

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MUCH that is of great interest in the material existing for the present series of biographical sketches must here from need of compression be passed over with very inadequate notice. Our Gospel records seem themselves to break down under the impossible weight of all that they have to tell concerning this part of the life of Jesus. Before giving, as they do, a few illustrative incidents, they mass the Lord's present activities together in a suggestive general statement which with Matthew takes this form: "he went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people." It is to be noted, for it has an important significance as bearing on the present-day question of the social gospel of Jesus—it is therefore to be noted that in the general view thus sketched by the Evangelist, of the Saviour's ministry in Galilee, it is again the "teaching" and the "preaching" that are set in the foreground of the crowded canvas.

But the victims of disease and of distress did not wait for him to find them where they were, nor even for him to come into their neighborhood. His fame went everywhere throughout Syria, and from everywhere were brought to him the sick to be healed, and the variously afflicted to be relieved. Not only from Palestine itself, but from beyond the limits of Palestine, they came. It was as it were an upheaval and a setting in motion of the whole population. From Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from beyond Jordan, from the regions of Tyre and Sidon, the concourse flowed, like a tide of the

sea, about Jesus' feet. He was overwhelmed with the rising and swelling surge of popular importunity.

Some expedient had to be adopted to ease the actual bodily pressure of people upon Christ's person. He had a "little boat" provided—we may suppose it a boat too small to hold any but himself and one or two helpers who should manage it—for his own special accommodation. The eagerness of sufferers to come into physical contact with him, to "touch" his person, forced him to this. Jesus was experiencing the inconvenience of fame, and especially of his peculiar kind of fame. His popularity was premature, was excessive. He deprecated it. It might hasten on the inevitable catastrophe too soon. So he insisted strongly that those who were healed should forbear to make him further known. The unclean spirits he charged—he charged them "much"—to abstain from proclaiming his true character.

Not far withdrawn from the margin of the Lake Genesaret, there rises gently to some height a hill, conjectured only, but with much probability, to have been in Jesus' time the scene of quite the most famous, the most fruitful, the most influential, historic occasion of public discourse that ever occurred in the annals of mankind. The discourse referred to has acquired a name from the nature of the place where it was delivered. It is called "The Sermon on the Mount." The hill on which it was pronounced has itself reciprocally received a name from association with the sermon. The opening sentences of that sermon all of them begin with the word "Blessed," which in Latin is "*Beati*." From this circumstance, the unidentified hill is often spoken of as "The Mount of the Beatitudes."

To this hill, Jesus, at about the time which we have now reached in his history, retired, probably at the close of a laborious day, for a season of solitary prayer. The season prolonged itself till it had outlasted the night.

There was reason. Jesus was about to take a step that would vitally affect the fortune of his cause; and this not only for the immediate future, but for all time to come. Such a crisis demanded special preparation on his part, an interval of isolation from the world, with profound abandonment of himself in communion with his heavenly Father. There must be a nightlong vigil of prayer.

With the dawning of the day, he called together his disciples and out of their number chose twelve, to hold thenceforth a peculiar relation to himself, and to bear accordingly, from his own choice of appellation, the distinctive title of "apostles." The personal names of those twelve obscure men became, by that simple outdoor act of oral appointment, act not even recorded at the time—some of them by that act alone, for nothing further is known of them—dedicated to universal and immortal renown. They were Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, James and John, also brothers, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, another James (son of Alpheus), another Simon, called also Zelotes (or the Zealot), two Judases, one, son of James, the other, Iscariot. To this last name on the roll is always added the sad clause, "who also betrayed him." The list thus given is that of Luke. Matthew and Mark give the same list, in the same order, with use, however, in some cases, of alternative individual names.

Jesus, after this solemn setting apart of the twelve apostles, seems to have descended from the summit of the mount to a lower level, or terrace, on its slope, there seating himself for an address to the people in general, who surrounded him in great numbers. The discourse which he pronounced is so familiar to all, that it would be superfluous to make anything like a full report of it here. It is by far the longest and most formal-seeming of all the Saviour's popular discourses. Its apparent prevailing ethical character has commended it to many

who are willing to take Jesus as teacher, while not owning the duty of obedience to him as Lord. But Jesus everywhere claims for himself, not simply respect paid as to a teacher, but obedience rendered as to a Lord; and he does this explicitly in the present discourse. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" is one form of expression occurring here in which he makes this claim.

Such language from Jesus shows that he accepted from men the appellation, Lord, in the full sense of all that the word implies. It was not a term of respectful, of reverent, homage. It was acknowledgment of duty to obey. Jesus does not found his teachings, in this sermon or elsewhere, on their own inherent self-evidencing character simply, but on the authority also of the Teacher. He solemnly glanced forward to a day approaching—"that day" he called it—when he himself as Lord would sit pronouncing judgment on men, saying to some, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The discourse is in fact profoundly religious as well as practically moral.

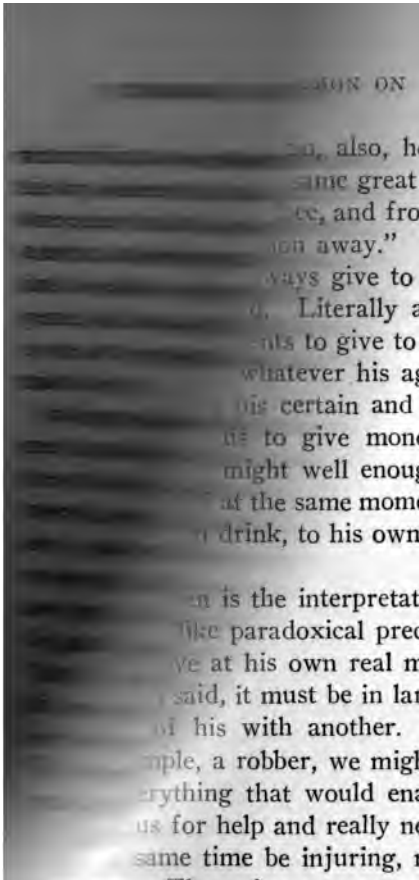
It has been seriously questioned whether the morality of the Sermon on the Mount is a practicable, and so really a practical, morality. For instance, "Resist not evil," or, as the Revised version renders, "Resist not him that is evil"—is that a practicable precept? The precept is stated broadly, comprehensively, in a form apparently admitting no exception. Can it be obeyed? Ought we to obey it? Would not obeying it abolish human government? Would it not introduce anarchy into the world—anarchy pure and simple? Would it not dissolve human society?

The question thus raised is, first of all, one of interpretation. What did Jesus mean by the precept? Did he mean all that his language, taken absolutely, can be made to include? Let us see. What was Jesus' method

in teaching? It was to a remarkable extent, probably beyond the practice of any other teacher in the world, the method of paradox. That is, he adopted the teaching expedient of stating truth in a form chosen as if for the purpose of challenging dissent, of provoking contradiction. This way of teaching aroused attention. It set people to thinking. It startled them. The impressions made by it were immediate, striking, strong, memorable. How is one to understand a teacher whose method is such? Evidently, by inquiry, by reflection, by study, by comparison of one saying of his with another, by teachably entering into his spirit, by invoking light to be shed on his doctrine from his own practice.

Now, although Jesus himself did, for the most part, refrain from resisting evil with force, he constantly resisted it with words—and sometimes, as we have already seen, and as we shall yet further see, with very vehement words. On one occasion—an occasion described in a previous chapter—we have even witnessed the author of the precept, “Resist not evil,” arming himself with a scourge, and thus with noble violence resisting and chastising the wicked behavior of men. By and by, we shall come to a case in which the Lamb of God, about to be laid unresisting on the altar of sacrifice, yet, for a moment at least, rouses to such withstanding of evil that those who have come to arrest him are thrown helplessly prostrate before him on the ground. He also at about the same moment bids his disciples sell their cloaks that they may buy themselves swords. Did he mean this last bidding literally? We instinctively think not; though (strangely, as would seem) the disciples, some of them at least, carried swords that night with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

If he did not mean literally the injunction to exchange cloaks for swords, no more did he mean literally and absolutely his contrary injunction of non-resistance to evil. What he meant by “Resist not evil” was some-



...o, also, he meant something prac-
 ...ame great discourse, he said, "Give
 ...ce, and from him that would borrow
 ...on away." He could not have meant
 ...ays give to every applicant whatever
 ...d. Literally and absolutely taken, this
 ...nts to give to a child of theirs anything
 ...whatever his age, might capriciously ask
 ...his certain and perhaps serious hurt. It
 ...us to give money to a drunkard asking
 ...might well enough know—nay, though he
 ...at the same moment tell us—that he wished
 ...to drink, to his own ruin.

...en is the interpretation to be applied to these
 ...like paradoxical precepts of Jesus? How are
 ...ve at his own real meaning in them? As has
 ...said, it must be in large part by comparing one
 ...of his with another. If we did not "resist,"
 ...mple, a robber, we might sometimes through him
 ...everything that would enable us to "give" to one
 ...us for help and really needing it. And we should
 ...same time be injuring, rather than benefiting, the
 There is one precept—a key-precept—in the
 ...on on the Mount, which furnishes us our required
 ...ion for all the rest. It is that precept which has
 ...ived the name of the Golden Rule: "All things
 ...atsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even
 ...do ye also unto them."

This precept stands in an instructive relation to what
 precedes it in the text of the discourse. Jesus has just
 been teaching religion, in its profoundest act and spirit—
 the act and spirit of prayer. He has told his disciples
 to ask from God, in perfect confidence that God will be-
 stow what they ask. He draws a parallel between God
 as Father, on the one hand, and earthly parents on the
 other. Do not earthly parents give, when their children

ask? But do not earthly parents give with care, with exercise of judgment, with discrimination? If a hungry child asks for a stone, thinking it a loaf of bread, does the parent give him that stone? "If ye, then," Jesus says, "being evil, know *how* to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things [perhaps not the precise things desired—such being not "good"] to them that ask him?" Then immediately follows the Golden Rule, but with a "therefore" in it: "All things, therefore"; "all things," that is to say, in a way of such thoughtful discrimination (exercised according to our less measure of judgment) as God himself exercises on our behalf in his bestowing, *so* we are to do as we would be done by. The principle of unselfish discrimination exercised by us on behalf of all the interests involved in any given case—this is the master-key to the difficult problems met with in the paradoxical precepts of Jesus, as it is the master-key to the ethical doubts and perplexities of our daily social life. We are to practise non-resistance within the limits thus prescribed; within the same limits we are to practise a free-handed benevolence.

Obedience to Jesus is a practicable, and therefore a practical, morality. But it is more and better than that. It is the height, the depth, the length, the breadth, of religion. Jesus closes his sermon with an impressive rhetorical figure, designed to show the contrasted ends resulting to two contrasted classes of his hearers, the obedient, on the one hand, and the disobedient, on the other. And the obedience and the disobedience are both represented by him to be toward himself. "These words of *mine*" is the phrase in which he makes his august, overawing assumption of authority. No wonder "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

It was a new voice in the world—a voice never since fallen silent. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

XVII

AT CAPERNAUM AND TO NAIN

AFTER delivering his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus apparently returned for a short stay, perhaps in pursuit of needed rest, to his abode in Capernaum. But he was followed as usual by multitudes. On his arrival in the city, he was met by a noteworthy fresh application for help. It came from a centurion. The centurion strengthened his appeal with influence from without. He got certain elders of the Jews to intercede for him. They were willing to do this, for the reason that, as they represented to Jesus, he, though a Gentile, was friendly to the Jewish nation, and had shown his generous good will by building them a synagogue.

What the centurion wanted was relief for a servant of his. This would naturally be a slave; indeed, the Greek word means bond-servant. It speaks well for the humane spirit of the centurion that he was thus warmly interested on behalf of his slave; for the slave-owners of that old Roman world were as a rule hard-hearted toward their human chattels. This suffering slave was "dear" to his master, and he now lay at the point of death. Jesus promptly said, "I will come and heal him."

The Lord's very different ways of meeting different applicants for help, must, it is instinctive to suppose, have been nicely discriminated in adaptation to their different characters. In the present case, the centurion had a chance to show himself a man of rare quality. It was not a perfectly obvious chance. He might have missed it without serious blame. But he did not miss it; for, as we learn from Luke, when Jesus, having set out, in company with the elders supporting the Roman's suit,

was now not far from the house, he received a remarkable message from the centurion, which ran, in substance, as follows: 'Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst thyself come. Neither thought I myself worthy to come to thee. But say the word only, and my servant will be healed. I am accustomed myself both to obey and to be obeyed. Obedience is a familiar thing to me. All that those over me bid, I do; all that I bid those under me, they do. Thus let it be now. Speak only, and thou shalt be obeyed, in whatever thou wilt.'

It is recorded that Jesus "marveled." Taken literally, this seems to imply that the centurion's message was unforeseen by him; that it took him by surprise. Perhaps indeed it did. Perhaps the Lord's supernatural knowledge was at command only as he needed it; so that his potential possession of it left his natural human experience in the main quite undisturbed. He turned to the multitude following him and exclaimed with admiration, "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." He added what was well adapted to excite jealousy in narrowly Jewish hearts, but what was of a purport to be good news indeed to all the world besides to the end of time: "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Then followed words that would tend to inflame selfish jealousy, if that sentiment existed, into resentment and rage: "But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth"! "*The* weeping and *the* gnashing of teeth"! Dreadful words, to issue from those lips!

During this aside of Jesus addressed to the multitude, the centurion perhaps appeared in person to hear from Jesus these gracious words of dismissal, "Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." And the servant was healed in that hour.

From Capernaum to Nain the distance is about twenty-five miles. Jesus, soon after what has just been narrated, perhaps the very next day, made an excursion to Nain. His disciples accompanied him, and the usual "great multitude." As he neared the city gate, behold, a procession was coming out. It was a funeral procession. The dead was a youth, the only son of a widowed mother. This case of bereavement had excited much sympathy; the procession was a numerous one. The sight of that desolated mother touched the heart of the Lord. She was weeping as only such a mother knows how to weep. Jesus said to her, "Weep not." With those words, he drew nigh and touched the bier. The bearers stopped and stood still. It was a moment of hush, no doubt, to the loud lamentations that had preceded, and of excited suspense.

Jesus must have been known to those whom he met, and uncertain expectation of the strange thing that might now happen, we cannot doubt, filled all hearts. But probably no one was prepared for what actually did occur. Jesus spoke to the dead youth on his bier, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" Then occurred a fulfilment of that prophecy of Jesus, uttered not long before to the unbelieving Jews at Jerusalem, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." For "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." And Jesus gave him to his mother.

Nothing so wonderful as this had yet anywhere before happened in the history of Jesus. The fame and rumor of it went abroad not only into and throughout all Judea, but beyond into the region surrounding. It penetrated to the dungeon in which John the Baptist was confined. That unconquerable spirit, though unconquered indeed, was depressed enough by his imprisonment to be in need of reassurance. His heart was full of

public zeal, which his personal sufferings could not extinguish. He sent some of his disciples to inquire of Jesus, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" "Go your way, and tell John," said Jesus, "the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me."

We may confidently trust that this message was by the Holy Spirit made effective to comfort and strengthen that great generous heart. The closing sentence of it especially must have been felt by John as a spur to his spirit. When John's disciples were gone, Jesus took occasion to pronounce that eulogy on John which has already been given in these pages—brief, but the most magnificent eulogy ever pronounced on any of the children of men.

A touching and beautiful incident occurred at about this time—it is uncertain where, but probably at Capernaum—which contributes a pathetic charm, quite beyond the reach of human art, to the wonderful variety of picturesque stories told in the Gospels illustrative of the endlessly many-sided character and behavior of Jesus. One Simon, a Pharisee, desired Jesus to be his guest at a meal. The openness to the public eye, the freedom even of public access, with which the domestic life of the Jews was conducted, has already been remarked upon. This trait now receives a curious illustration. A woman expressly marked by the Evangelist as "a sinner," that is, an unchaste woman, made her way unhindered into the house. She came to the place where Jesus reclined at the table. It was not a chance intrusion of hers. She had learned that Jesus was there, and she came prepared to do him honor, with her love and her tears. She brought with her a cruse of ointment, an alabaster cruse. She did not present herself to Jesus; she did not stand be-

fore him, but behind him, "at his feet." Here, apparently without a word spoken, she stood and wept in silence. Her tears fell in a stream that wet the Saviour's feet. She bowed and wiped those feet with the flowing hair of her head. She kissed them with passionate fervor, kiss after kiss.

Beautiful dumb demonstration of love with sorrow—love which, though dumb in humility and shame, must yet somehow express itself! And what eloquence beyond words did that love with sorrow achieve! Alas, Simon! His heart was not equal to his opportunity. He missed to see what was there to be seen. The poor foolish man, in his self-blinding conceit of sagacity, was saying within himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him, that she is a sinner." Though Simon had only thought these things, not spoken them, Jesus showed himself indeed a prophet, by perceiving, and that very plainly, "who and what manner" of man *he* was. "Simon," said Jesus, "I have somewhat to say to thee." Such an offer of remark would prepare special attention. "Master, say on," was Simon's token of readiness to hear. A little parable, the first one recorded from Jesus' lips, was the form under which the great teacher by parable now gave Simon his lesson: "A certain lender had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?" Simon answered and said, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most." And he said unto him, "Thou hast rightly judged."

Up to this point, the application of the parable could not have been apparent, perhaps to any one present. The Lord now turned toward the woman; but he still spoke to Simon. "Seest thou this woman?" He spoke thus of her in her own presence; but it was with a tenderness that emptied the seeming discourtesy of any disrespect.

The disrespect was all to be toward him who deserved it; for Simon deserved rebuke, not only by his personal character, but also by his conduct on that occasion as host. He had failed of due customary attention to his guest. Apparently he had invited Jesus, either out of a mere supercilious curiosity to see, at dignified leisure, for himself, a man so much talked of; or else, perhaps, also out of a covert hostility to him. At any rate, he seems to have discriminated against Jesus, by omitting in his case the usual little preliminary offices of hospitality which Eastern manners accord to a guest.

"I entered," said the Lord, "into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many [this would show the Lord's full knowledge of her character], are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Simon's secret thoughts have thus been openly answered, in a manner as self-evidently just as it must have been both unexpected and unwelcome to him. The woman now is for the first time addressed: "Thy sins [sins to *her* not spoken of as 'many'] are forgiven." This seems to have offended more than Simon alone; for Jesus' fellow guests began to say within themselves, perhaps also in undertone one to another among themselves (the Greek may mean either "within" or "among"), "Who is this that even forgiveth sins?"

If this question was possibly overheard by the jealous ears of the woman, to her momentary discomposure, her fears must have been effectually allayed, when Jesus added, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." But the evil spirit of unbelief in those who criticized was no doubt confirmed. The same thing may be a savor of

life unto life or of death unto death. It is as we ourselves choose.

Will the woman thus forgiven attach herself thenceforth to her Saviour? Our next chapter opens a new and remarkable epoch in the Lord's history; perhaps, among the "many others"—that is, many other women, there to be spoken of—this loving penitent, with something of an unconscious poet-heart in her bosom, may be supposed namelessly included. The supposition would be grateful; and her possession and devotion of that alabaster cruse of ointment are in favor of the conjecture.

XVIII

A CYCLE OF PARABLES

SOON after the incident last related, Jesus seems to have set out from Capernaum on another preaching tour in Galilee. This time a new feature marked his progress. It was a feature as beautiful as to us of the West it appears foreign and singular. Besides the twelve apostles, a select different following attended him. This was a band of women; women who, grateful for services rendered them by him, thus, as a way of testifying their love and their thanks, attached themselves to his train to go with him in his journeys. They seem not to have been poor women; but women able to defray their own charges in traveling, and besides to contribute, as we are told they did, out of their private resources to the comfort of their Master. Their ministrations they doubtless found to be its own exceeding rich reward. Mary Magdalene is named first among these ministering women. Of her, it is said that she had been delivered from a seven-fold possession of demons. There is no good reason to suppose that this Mary had previously been, according to the slander of the current tradition concerning her, a woman of lewd life.¹

In the course of his various circuits starting from Capernaum, Jesus may not improbably have made somewhat frequent returns for rest—such rest as he could command—at his abode in that city. On one such occasion, the concourse of people thronging him in this refuge of his was so great and so eager that “they”—that is,

¹ In my narrative poem, “The Epic of Paul,” I present Mary Magdalene in that character (very different from the one popularly attributed to her) in which I believe it better to conceive this deeply wronged woman, of lovely and pathetic memory.

he and his household—could not so much as take their ordinary meals. We cannot be surprised that Jesus' "friends"—his kindred perhaps may be meant by the word—were concerned on his behalf; that they even thought it time to interfere. They interfered, and with zeal. They used, or sought to use, a gentle violence in restraint of him. "For they said, He is beside himself."

A fresh instance of exorcism at his hands, taking place at this time, in concurrence perhaps with these forcible attempts of his friends to save him from himself as one not perfectly sane, gave somewhat plausible occasion to certain scribes come down from Jerusalem, to apply their interpretation to the phenomena presented in the highly eccentric case of this notorious man Jesus. "He hath Beelzebub," they said; "by the prince of the demons he casts out the demons."

Jesus was excited to an unusual pitch of indignation by this blasphemous charge, laid against him, of collusion on his part with the kingdom of evil. "All their sins," he said, "shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." The Evangelist Mark expressly adds, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

Maliciously attributing to Satan the authentic work of the Holy Spirit is the "unpardonable sin." It is "an eternal sin." It reproduces itself forever; or perhaps we should understand that dreadful expression, "an eternal sin," to mean that it entails consequences of penalty which endure forever. "Ye offspring of vipers!" so Jesus addresses those blaspheming opponents of his. Vengeful words! They were like a drawn sword of flame from his lips. They burn yet on the printed page. One can easily imagine that, when uttered, they seemed hot enough to consume their objects with the breath of the speaker's mouth.

The insolent scribes and Pharisees present there, although they probably had just witnessed that casting out of the demon, said they would like to see a "sign" from Jesus. Jesus indignantly refused them their request. "An evil and adulterous generation," he sternly said, "seeketh after a sign." He said that there should be no sign given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. Then came from Jesus the second of his many allusions, allusions growing ever more and more distinct toward the end, to his own impending death and soon-following resurrection; the first allusion was more closely veiled, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again." "As Jonah," he now said, "was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale [rather, sea-monster], so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Both these first two allusions were addressed to unbelievers who demanded a "sign"; and it was in accordance with the Lord's usual manner toward such hearers, to speak darkly in parable. Jesus, in so paralleling Jonah's case with his own, seems to give the weight of his authority in favor of that interpretation of the Old Testament story in question which makes it not only historical but literal. (It is interesting, by the way, to consider that within the time of the present generation satisfactory evidence has been supplied of the existence of a species of whale quite capable of swallowing a man whole. See Frank T. Bullen's book, "The Cruise of the Cachalot.")

In the midst of the discourse following the request for a sign, or immediately upon the end of it, a strange exclamation addressed to Jesus came from the ranks of the multitude. It was a woman that uttered it. "Blessed," she cried, "is the womb that bare thee and the breasts which thou didst suck." This admiring and affectionate congratulation, spoken of Mary, but meant for Jesus, Jesus turned aside both from his mother and from himself, to bestow the benediction of it elsewhere. "Yea,

rather," said he, "blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." It may be that the emotional woman who spoke up as narrated, had just had pointed out to her Jesus' mother herself, at that moment, with her other sons, Jesus' brothers, seeking access to Jesus. For "while he was yet speaking," so it is said, "his mother and his brethren stood without seeking to speak to him." Word to this effect passed on from one to another till it reached Jesus.

Whether or not Jesus gratified the wish thus conveyed to him, is not expressly stated. The probability seems to be that he did not. He said: "Who is my mother? And who are my brethren?" Then he looked round on them that encompassed him, and said: "Behold, my mother and my brethren. For whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

It is likely that the mother Mary, with her other sons, had come on a second errand of interference to Jesus, to dissuade him from the work that he was doing. They may have feared for his personal safety, seeing the enmity he excited among the Jewish ruling classes; possibly they were desirous to have it openly appear that they were influentially related to a personage so conspicuous as Jesus had become. Whatever was the case, their aim was frustrated. Jesus took the opportunity to declare himself independent enough of ordinary earthly relationships of kindred, to disregard them entirely. But in doing so, how endearingly near to himself he draws every soul, in every time, in every clime, that simply and sincerely does the will of God! This caressing embrace in words from Jesus of all obedient hearts was not, because so inclusive of all, therefore exclusive or neglectful of any. Mary, too, and each one of his earthly kindred as well, might, if they would, find a home in that capacious bosom of love opening wide, and equally wide, for the welcome of us all.

Jesus found the seaside, or, as we should say, the lakeside, highly favorable for his purposes in teaching. It offered him an easy escape from the too importunate pressure of the crowd. It was apparently on the same day with the incident of his mother's coming to seek him, that he went out again to the waterside, and there, withdrawn a little way in a boat, taught the people standing in thick ranks on the shore. If one could but see a photographic picture of the scene!

At this time he first entered fully upon his method of teaching by parables. Why at this time? Why at all? It is a mistake to suppose that it was solely, or even chiefly, to make his instructions easily understood. That was not the Saviour's object in uttering parables; and it certainly was not the result that followed. Indeed, on this very occasion, we learn that his more immediate disciples, those closest in his confidence, sought to have his parables explained to them. They also asked him, "Why speakest thou unto them [the multitude] in parables?" Jesus' reply should be deeply pondered: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. . . Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not." Mark and Luke make the Lord's words even more solemn: "Unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand." The main first purpose, then, of the parable, in the Lord's use of it, was not to make clear, it was rather to veil, instruction. But that, we may well believe, was far from being its only purpose. It has, in fact, proved a marvelously fruitful form of wrapping up, or enfolding, for future use, instruction which, at the time when it was first given, was beyond the capacity of intelligence, above the reach of moral elevation, existing in those who received it. This has turned out to be the actual utility of the Lord's parables; and such utility in

them was no doubt intended and foreseen by their author.

But there may be discovered a call for teaching by parable, peculiar to that particular stage which Jesus had now reached in the fulfilment of his Messianic mission. His miracles had excited universal attention; they had commanded for the worker of them a very general popular belief. But this belief was for the most part very superficial, very unsatisfactory. It did not rise, except in a comparatively small number of cases, to the faith of true discipleship. It created for Jesus a popularity indeed, but a useless popularity; a popularity that might even be worse than useless. There was danger of its forcing on the end prematurely. Jesus had now, by a somewhat extensive canvass of the field, come "to his own," in a sense of those words wider than the sense in which they could apply to his experience as teacher in Nazareth; and although he had not yet been, in this wider sense of his coming, decisively rejected as he was there, still it was again true that "his own received him not"—that is, received him not as it was necessary that he should be received, in order to the establishing of his kingdom. He had once given the Galileans their chance, their day of visitation; and they had not known it. There might be a small remnant of them still left to be won; though the heart of the great mass was waxed hopelessly gross.

The Saviour would now teach in a way to sift his hearers. Those of his hearers who were rightly disposed, would be drawn to him; and as for the rest, his sentence on them was like that sad sentence of old on reprobate Israel, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." There is this melancholy undertone to be discerned in the first of the present cycle of parables, that of the Sower—the purport of which is, that only a sifted few among his hearers heard him to profit and to salvation.

The parable and the explanation are both of them too familiar to need any repetition of their lesson here. The same may be said of the parable following, namely, that of the Tares and the Wheat. "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear," is the warning from Jesus, intended to sift his hearers. The rightly-disposed among them would be found out by such teaching; found out not so much by him, the teacher, as by themselves, the taught. It would be like the action of a magnet on a mingled mass, composed of particles of iron, few in number, lost amid innumerable grains of sand. The iron particles feel the attraction of the magnet and respond; the grains of sand abide inert and dead. So the susceptible, the obedient, hearts, few in number amid the multitude, would know the Saviour's voice, masked though it were in parable; the rest would hear as if they heard not.

It has needed nineteen Christian centuries to furnish that commentary and explanation which we now enjoy, for the parable of the Mustard Seed as symbol of the growth of the kingdom of God. That parable, together with the rest, Jesus explained to the inner circle of his disciples. This particular explanation, however, has not been recorded for us in the Gospels. The parable of the Tares and the Wheat was impressively explained by its author, in terms which we may still read with awe. It was a parable of the "end," as well as of what should precede the end.

The "end" meant by the Lord was not, as it is most natural for us to understand it, the end of the world, in the most inclusive sense of that expression, but the end of the order of things then existing; an end, as some suppose, that was reached at the coming of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem with its temple, and the final abolition therewith of worship according to the ritual of Moses. Others postpone the "end" in question to a time still remaining future. But in any case the sense of the expression, "end of the world," is not

end of the material universe, nor even end of mankind's possession of the earth; but end of the then current age or dispensation.

The parable of the Leaven in the Meal, that of the Treasure Hidden in the Field, that of the Pearl of Great Price, and that of the Net cast into the sea, follow one upon another in immediate succession, devoted, all of them, to setting forth the nature of that invisible kingdom of heaven which it was the Lord's work to establish in the earth—the nature of that kingdom, and the relation to it of individual men and women. The effect of all was to make the spiritually prepared explore themselves deeply and become disciples indeed; but to leave the unsusceptible, the obstinate, the rebellious, in the darkness which they loved more than the light.

It is, to the thoughtful mind, pathetic to read that when Jesus asked his hearers, those chosen hearers who were closest about him, "Have ye understood all these things?" they easily answered, "Yea." At least, judging by their subsequent exhibitions of slowness to apprehend, one cannot but suspect that their apprehension now was very imperfect at the best. But the patient Lord must content himself with what his disciples had; he would not require of them what they had not. Yet it would be strange if some sadness did not often invade the Master's heart, did not invade it now, to feel how far short his chosen disciples stopped of the full height and depth of his meaning.

XIX

A CYCLE OF MIRACLES

THE cycle of parables was succeeded by a cycle of miracles. That crowded day of teaching done, in which the parables already referred to were spoken, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over unto the other side." That meant the other side of the lake. The going would of course be by water. Their voyage was destined to prove one that those disciples would never forget. They started at once, without preparation. The boat in which he had sat teaching was the one that bore Jesus; but there were other boats to accompany that. Jesus must have been in a state of extreme fatigue and exhaustion from his labors, not only of that day, but of many days preceding. This is not expressly told us by any one of the three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, synoptists so called, who all of them relate the incidents of the voyage. But they unite in saying that Jesus fell asleep on the way. On a cushion in the stern of the boat that sacred head pillowed itself to this grateful rest.

While he lay sleeping, the boat was brought suddenly into the most imminent danger. A storm of wind poured down through the gorges in the mountainous eastern shore of the lake, and instantly wrought the water into billows that overswept the little craft and threatened to founder it. The commotion did not disturb the profound repose of that divine-human sleeper. His companions were thoroughly terrified. Their terror for their lives was too much for their awe of their Master. They come to him where he lies sleeping, cradled on that stormy sea like an infant gently lulled by the breathing of its mother to slumber on her breast.

But let us imagine him still sleeping undisturbed, while we listen for a moment to a writer other than the Evangelists, a man of our own time, telling us what he has himself experienced of just such a sudden violent storm as that described in the Gospels, occurring on the same lake. Doctor Thomson, in his interesting and instructive work,¹ says: "I spent a night on the mountain east of the lake. . . The sun had scarcely set when the wind began to blow toward the lake, and it continued all night long with constantly increasing violence; so that when we descended to the shore the next morning the surface of the lake was like that of a boiling caldron. . . To understand the causes of these sudden and violent tempests, we must remember that the lake lies low—six hundred eighty feet below the sea; that the mountainous plateau of the Jaulân rises to a considerable height, spreading backward to the wilds of the Haurân, and upward to snowy Hermon; that the watercourses have worn or washed out profound ravines and wild gorges, converging to the head of this lake; and that these act like great funnels, to draw down the cold winds from the mountains. . . Such winds are not only violent, but they come down suddenly, and often when the sky is perfectly clear. I once went in to swim near the hot baths; and, before I was aware, a wind came rushing over the cliffs with such force that it was with difficulty I could regain the shore."

The disciples awake their Master. One Evangelist makes them say, almost upbraidingly, "Carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus rises, but not until he has said to his trembling companions, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then he rebukes the roaring wind and the raging sea. "Peace, be still," he calmly said. The deaf winds heard, and the deaf waters too had ears for that voice. The winds ceased blowing, the

¹ "The Land and the Book," II, pp. 351, 352.

waves ceased rolling, and there was a great calm. The poor disciples were afraid now with a different fear. "They feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'"

From a lake whose present calm was as full to them of awfulness as had been its storm, they stepped ashore, those rescued voyagers, in the country of the Gerasenes. Whether that same night, or not until the next morning, is uncertain. Whichever the time, they were fiercely and startlingly welcomed to land. For two violent demoniacs met them, coming out of the tombs in which like wild beasts they made their lairs. The mountainside was pierced then—it remains so now—with excavations in the rock made for burial-places. Here dwelt these two demon-ridden human beings, making the neighborhood so dangerous for passers-by that it was avoided by all. But stress of weather had driven thither those who now landed at the spot.

Mark and Luke speak of only one demoniac, though Matthew mentions two—one of whom may have retreated to his dwelling-place among the tombs, while the other, advancing from afar off, fell at the feet of Jesus, crying out with a loud voice: "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not." For Jesus had said to him, "Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." "What is thy name?" said Jesus. "Legion, for we are many," was the reply.

The demons seem to have had a shuddering horror of being banished back to their "abyss." They preferred to Jesus a singular request, which Jesus, with a singular complaisance, granted. Perhaps it was in part to show to his disciples, for the strengthening of their faith, the absolute power that he wielded, for sufferance also as well as for prohibition. The demons pleaded to be allowed to go from their dwelling-place in the man to lodg-

ment in swine. There was a herd of these unclean beasts feeding on the mountainside. Jesus said, "Go." They went; and for proof not to be gainsaid that they indeed went, and that they actually existed to go, the swine, so invaded, instantly start and with a headlong rush plunge precipitately down the steep slope of the mountain. They cannot stop at the bottom; their impetus carries them over the narrow ledge of level shore into the deep water of the lake, where they are all drowned, to the number of about two thousand.

It is worth noting, by the way, as a little singular, that Matthew, who is alone in making the number of the demoniacs two, gives no account of any healing effected, beyond what is very barely implied in his statement that the demons were told in one permissive word, "Go," in reply to their request to be allowed to enter into the swine. The interest of the Evangelists, all three, seems to have been in the behavior of the demons, and in Christ's peculiar treatment of them, rather than in the relief afforded to human distress.

The swineherds were frightened; they fled, scattering the news of what had happened. People flocked from city and country to the spot, that they might see for themselves what was there to be seen. They came to Jesus, he having been described to them perhaps, or being in some way now recognized by them as the responsible author of the miracle; and there they find the man that had been so afflicted sitting at his Saviour's feet. He had been for a long time too savage to wear clothes; but he was clothed now, and in his right mind. Those who had seen what occurred reported their observations to the newcomers; and then a thing that was hardly to be looked for resulted. Those unaccountable Gerasenes commenced beseeching Jesus to depart! They obtained their desire; for Jesus reentered his boat and crossed back to the other side of the lake. The relieved victim of that evil possession desired to go with

Jesus. But no; Jesus replied: "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." This was a deviation on Jesus' part from what had previously been his course in similar cases. Perhaps the deviation was due to a compassionate wish that he had not to let that region of country, so inhospitable to him, remain utterly without witness of the salvation that had just visited it in vain.

Objection has sometimes been made against this miracle of Jesus that it was a wanton destruction of property; in effect, a wrongful infringement of proprietary rights. The objection has no force whatever that does not lie as strongly, nay, more strongly, against the permitting of demoniacal possession in general. If God could permit a man to be deprived of himself by a demon, much more might God permit men to be so deprived of property; especially if that property were of a questionable sort, as was the case with those swine.

The simple fact is that, as against the Creator, there is no right whatever of property vested in any creature. If God was working there, in what Jesus did or what Jesus permitted, then who are we to argue against God? Or who are we to say, This was unworthy of God, and therefore God did not do it? We may easily be more ingenious than judicious in criticizing God's ways, and finding reasons, whether for or against.

A brilliant agnostic writer some years ago made himself very merry laughing at this story of the Gerasene swine as a thing quite too ridiculous for sober belief. He was more witty than wise in doing so. It would be a quite adequate justification of the Lord's conduct in acceding to the whimsical request of those demons, if his object in doing so was only to furnish irrefutable evidence of the reality of such evil beings; and of the reality of their power, under sufferance from God, to take violent possession of alien animal organizations, human

and other, and wield them to their own perverse will. Except for this evidence against the unbelieving naturalistic explanation of the phenomena involved, it would be much more easy than, in the face of such evidence, it actually is, to maintain, as some do, that demoniacal possession in Jesus' time was simply a superstitious name for epilepsy, catalepsy, lunacy, or other like commonplace disorder. It may properly be noted that alternative names for the region in which this incident occurred are employed by different Evangelists. Of course, the locality may anciently have had duplicate, or even triplicate, designations; but the name which, in native use on the spot, has survived under some modification to our day, is approximately the one here given, "the country of the Gerasenes."

Jesus was now again by the sea on its western side, where a multitude was already assembled to welcome his return. He no doubt resumed his teaching, but his teaching was presently interrupted. One Jairus, a man of consideration in the community, for he was a ruler of the synagogue, came to him with a petition for help. His earnestness was extreme; it made him both importunate and humble. Jewish magnate as he was, he fell at Jesus' feet, and besought him "much." His daughter was dying; "my little daughter" he piteously and affectionately called her. One Evangelist has Jairus say, "My daughter is even now dead." After his first plea to Jesus, the father did indeed get word, brought him from his home, that all was over with his little beloved. Not even so was his hope of help quenched. "Come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live," he said. It was a beautiful triumph of love and faith over despair. Jesus went with Jairus, and the multitude followed. They followed so close that they pressed upon the person of the Lord.

In the midst of the multitude, was a poor sick woman,

victim of an incurable disease that had drained not only her strength but her purse. Twelve years long she had been suffering many things under the hands of many physicians, and all that time had grown steadily worse rather than better. But she had heard of Jesus and she said secretly to herself: 'Here yet is hope for me, even me. I cannot expect to attract his attention, I may not get near enough to him to take hold of his hands or his feet; if I can but touch the hem of his garment! He need not know it; no one need know it; but it will cure me, if I succeed. I will try.' She tried, and she succeeded. Oh, gladness! that instant "the fountain of her blood [which for twelve years had never ceased draining her life] was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed."

But she was also found out in this her successful attempt at larceny of life and of health! Jesus perceived that the peculiar power which was his had gone forth, and, staying his steps, he turned round to the throng and said, "Who touched my garments?" The woman was frightened. Happily, for her momentary relief, when one and another had denied and she thus stood increasingly in danger of being exposed, Peter spoke up in unintended, unconscious defense and concealment of her. "Master," said he, "the multitudes press thee and crush thee." Perhaps she would escape detection after all! But no; Jesus insists, "Some one did touch me." It was the vital touch of faith that he had felt. The woman saw that there was no use in trying longer to remain concealed. She came tremblingly forward and, falling down at his feet, confessed her secret touch, and declared aloud to all how with the touch she had at once been healed. Then these words fell like a dew of healing benediction from those holy lips, words paternal in benignity, though addressed no doubt by one junior to one senior in age: "Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Now it is that the final, fatal message, already alluded to, comes from the synagogue-ruler's house: "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." The Master speaks, and says to Jairus: "Fear not; only believe." And on they move, Jesus perhaps at every step, we know not, dropping balm of healing on his way. Arrived at the house, Jesus stays the multitude, even the apostles—all but Peter, James, and John—outside the door. The customary loud lamentation over the dead had already commenced. Jesus calmly says: "Why make ye a tumult and weep? The child is not dead, but sleepeth." They stopped their lamentation enough to laugh the speaker to scorn, "knowing that she was dead." But Jesus puts them all forth—no question of his right or of his power!—and taking with him the father, the mother, and those three chosen disciples of his, goes into the room where the child lay. There all was simple, all majestic; for omnipotence was there. Jesus took the dead child by her little helpless hand and said, "Maiden, arise." She immediately arose and walked. "And he commanded that something should be given her to eat." He had supplied life to the dead with a word; he might with a word have supplied nourishment to the living. It is a remarkable, a most reassuring, note of sobriety and truthfulness in the narrative, that with perfect simplicity it is related, "He commanded that something should be given her to eat." The age of the damsel is recorded. She was twelve years old.

The Lord gave strict charge that nothing be told of what had thus been done. But the fame of it went everywhere abroad. How could it be otherwise? And why did Jesus impose a command that he no doubt knew would not be obeyed? Yet the obedient would obey; and such would not miss the reward of having triumphantly endured a test of obedience so severe. Meantime the apostles would gradually be prepared to understand that their Master did not build his hopes of success in his

mission mainly on miracle-working; much less on the notoriety that miracles earned for their author.

Miracles were the largess that this prince in his progresses through his land—progresses accomplished on foot, and with such a following!—scattered everywhere with prodigal bounty. He was passing from the house of Jairus on his way, when two blind men took up a pursuit of him. "Have mercy on us, thou son of David," they cried aloud as they went. This is the first mention of Jesus' being called by that royal title of his, "Son of David." He reached "the house," perhaps his own house, perhaps Peter's, and the blind men find him there. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" he asked them. "Yea, Lord," they said. The measure of the faith that they had, not the measure of the faith they professed, should be the measure of the blessing bestowed. Jesus answered, "According to your faith be it done unto you," at the same time touching their eyes. Their eyes were opened, and they saw. Jesus was strict in enjoining it upon them not to tell what he had done. But they went forth and spread his fame abroad.

These men, joyful perhaps rather than grateful, since they were not obedient, were no sooner gone out of the door, than there was brought to Jesus a demon-ridden wretch who was dumb. His evil inmate had the malicious whim to keep his victim from the use of his vocal organs. The demon was cast out, and the dumb man spoke. There was much marveling on the part of the multitude, but the marveling, it is to be feared, was that of idle and gossiping curiosity, rather than that of reverence and faith. The Pharisees, for their part, applied again their easy, their blasphemous, explanation, "By the prince of the demons he casts out demons."

It was a sad, but a fit, conclusion to such a display of power to save as had thus been made by Jesus, apparently to so little permanent spiritual result, when he

now for the last time returned to Nazareth once more, to be there finally and decisively rejected by his fellow townspeople. Poor benighted souls! "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary [that the mother, not the father, should thus be mentioned is perhaps an indication that, as has before been suggested, Joseph was now dead], and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" Thus they thought and talked. "And they were offended in him." "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid hands upon a few sick folk and healed them."

And Jesus "marveled," as it is noted that he had marveled once before. Before, he marveled at the faith of a foreigner, a heathen. This time it was at the unbelief of Jews, his own neighbors, that he marveled.

XX

THE FAREWELL TOUR IN MIDDLE GALILEE

OUR Lord's laborious circuits of cities and villages have thus far been confined almost wholly to that district of country which we may venture to designate as Middle Galilee, with Capernaum for center. He will soon transfer his activities elsewhere. But the present chapter has still to deal with work done in the same circle of territory. It will describe the Lord's farewell tour of preaching in the region that had already been favored, beyond what had been any other or would be any other in the world, with the words of his mouth and with the works of his hand. Preaching is, as it has been before, the object; but miracles, as they have done before, will attend incidentally—for the most part, miracles of healing; but in one case, a miracle of beneficence, creative, and wrought on a colossal scale; and in another, an exceptional case, a miracle of what might seem almost like pure demonstration.

The thronging of the multitudes, seen to be so needy, and in the main so unconscious of that need in them which was deepest, filled the heart of the Lord with pity of their plight. Jesus determined on sending out his apostles to preach and to work wonders of exorcism and of healing. The country was populous beyond what we readily conceive. The contracted little region of Galilee, scarcely so large as the State of Delaware, only a trifle larger than the English county of Lancaster, is said by Josephus to have contained two hundred and four cities of not less than fifteen thousand inhabitants each. The central portion was at least as densely peopled as any other.

To visit so many swarming towns with the gospel was a great undertaking. Jesus gave his twelve apostles instructions for their guidance which he afterward in large part duplicated to "the seventy" of his disciples whom he dispatched on a similar errand of itinerant evangelism. He badè them restrict their ministry to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel"—these, as distinguished from the Gentiles, on the one hand, and even from the Samaritans, on the other. It was not time yet for the predestined eventual mission to the world at large. The missionary apostles were to go from city to city; if persecuted in one city, fleeing to another.

It seems as if the directions given them went beyond the requirements of the tour immediately in prospect, and took in by anticipation the work which they would have to do after their Lord should be crucified. He said, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come"—language most naturally referred to Christ's "coming" in the destruction of Jerusalem. He faithfully forewarned them that they would encounter hardship and suffering. "Fear not," he said. Men would threaten, men would persecute, men would put to death. "Be not afraid," said Jesus, "of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Somber exhortation! But the exhortation was supported by promise. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." . . . "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven."

Strict, even stern, is the claim that this unique Teacher advances on his own behalf to paramount, to supreme, allegiance from his followers—allegiance overriding every other, the most sacred, tie of obligation that can hold between one human being and another. "He that loveth father or mother more than me," said Jesus, "is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter

more than me is not worthy of me." That, for his sake, a disciple of his should "hate" "his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also," was another form from Jesus' lips of the same enormous claim for himself.

When ever was other such teacher as he? The accompanying promises were as large and as confident as the claims; and both claims and promises were often put in that language of paradox which this Teacher loved to use. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"; "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me"; "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward";—such were some of the assurances given by Jesus to sustain his disciples under the staggering weight of responsibility and danger thrust upon them.

One cannot but imagine that, when the foregoing last thing was said by Jesus in sending his apostles forth, some outside hearers had drawn near; and that to affect those outside hearers, as well as to affect the apostles themselves, that last thing was partly aimed. The Lord was softened with prophetic compassion and sympathy toward his disciples, thus about to go out as lambs in the midst of wolves, and tenderly, with a kind of affectionate diminutive, he called them "these little ones"; at the same time bespeaking for them, at the hands of any and all, offices of kindness, which for their sake he promised, and promised "verily," should, down even to the gift of a cup of cold water only, not be suffered to go without grateful reward. Strange and beautiful mingling of magisterial severity with graciousness ineffably thoughtful and sweet!

The undertone of pathos which, from a point a little earlier than the one now reached, the susceptible sense

hears moaning in a gentle crescendo throughout the whole subsequent history, breaks for a moment here into a clear note of tragedy, with the record of the death of John the Baptist in prison. To think of that greatest of the prophets, that willing, that generous, that joyous, self-effacer, that morning-star forerunning the Sun—to think of him beheaded in prison, just to meet the prompted whim of a wanton dancing-girl at a royal feast!

When news of the fate of John was brought to Jesus, it seemed to him a warning that he must heed. He withdrew by boat to a place of retirement. But there was no place of retirement for Jesus. Wherever he went, he drew the tide after him as the moon draws the sea. Poor weary footfarers, the people took the circuit of the lake shore and found him out where he was. Indeed, they had made such speed in running, that they were on the ground before him. He could not resist the eloquence of such importunity. He had compassion on them and healed their sick. But there was more need to be provided for than that which consisted in cases, comparatively few, of sickness seeking relief.

Evening came on, and that inconsiderate crowd were without food in the desert. The disciples saw the state of the case, and they begged the Master to send the multitude away that in the cities and villages round about they might buy themselves food. "Give ye them to eat," said the Lord. The disciples were dumbfounded. He had commanded an impossibility; and they virtually told him this. He bade them find out and report to him the resources actually in hand. "Five loaves, and two fishes"—a ludicrously inadequate supply. This supply seems to have been in the hands of a boy present there, who probably, with a forecasting eye to business, had brought it thither for sale to the highest bidder. We gather this from John's account, who tells us that Andrew said, "There is a lad here with five barley loaves and two fishes." Little, but enough for seed, in the hands of

a husbandman like Jesus! He bade his disciples make the multitude take seats on the grass, which was plenty in the place, arranging themselves in groups of hundreds and fifties. This arrangement made counting easy. The number of the multitude proved to be about five thousand souls, and there were women and children not reckoned in this summation.

Jesus took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, lifting his eyes homeward toward heaven, first of all gave thanks. (There must have been something peculiarly impressive in this giving of thanks by the Lord. John refers to it incidentally afterward in a manner that indicates this, when, in simply identifying a particular spot, he calls it "the place where they ate bread *after the Lord had given thanks.*") He then broke the loaves in pieces and gave to the disciples for distribution. He afterward divided the fishes, and dispensed to each as much as each desired. They all ate and were filled.

It was a miraculous feast; but, well considered, the feast that God multiplies to mankind in every year's harvest is not one whit less miraculous. This latter miracle is annually wrought before our eyes, and yet so out of our sight that we blindly do not wonder at it. That miracle of the five thousand fed plenteously from but five barley loaves and two fishes, seems to have been wrought with as little demonstration as is the yearly miracle of seeding and harvest. It is not told at what point the multiplication of quantity took place. Probably no one could have told; probably no one saw. We may conjecture that, in a manner not attracting attention, the loaves continued to furnish pieces for distribution, as long as those heavenly hands continued to break them; and similarly the fishes lasted for division to the people. There was some overflow and surplus of creative beneficence; but nothing was wasted. The Lord had all gathered up, and twelve baskets were filled with the fragments of remainder. The Evangelists, all

the four uniting here, tell the story and make no comment. The true comment is the story.

The immediate effect of this prodigious work was threatening in character. It incited the people to a movement which would compromise Jesus and precipitate a catastrophe. They said: 'This is he; let us make him king.' Jesus accordingly at once hurried his disciples into the boat, to return without him, or before him, to the other side, while he should himself disperse the multitude. These two things accomplished, the Lord went up into the mountain apart to pray. It was a crisis again. There night overtook him.

Meantime the disciples had trouble in making their transit by boat. They had head winds and there was a heavy sea. While they struggled with their oars, making little progress, they peered through the darkness and saw what alarmed them. It was the appearance of a man walking on the waters. It was an "apparition"! They cried out with terror. That moving form approached them. But a voice answered their cry. It was a well-known voice, and the words were words of peace. "Be of good cheer," it said; "it is I; be not afraid." Peter responded, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters." "Come," said Jesus. Peter ventured—a noble venture of faith. But his faith failed, and he began to sink. "Lord, save me," he cried. Jesus gave him his hand, and they went both of them up into the boat. Therewith the wind ceased, and "straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going," namely, Gennesaret.

This, at first blush, might seem, as suggested at the beginning of the chapter, almost like a mere miracle of demonstration. But wisely considered it was not such. There was reason why the disciples should be sent on in advance of their Master, and there was reason why the Master should be left for that night season alone. Then there was reason why he should rejoin his dis-

ciples; and the way he took was the one practicable way. Yet once more in Gennesaret (where Capernaum was situated), the familiar scene is repeated of the Lord besieged with multitudes in need of his healing hand; and once more with lavish bounty he showers round his gifts. His very garments dripped medicinal balm whenever they were touched—if it was a hand of faith that touched them.

The feeding of the five thousand had its sequel in a teaching occasioned by it. This John alone reports. The multitude that had been filled by the dispensations from that miraculous hand, came back on the morrow and, finding the wonder-worker gone, took boats that had just been brought from Tiberias to the place, and hastened in them across to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. "Rabbi," they wonderingly said to him, "when camest thou here?" They had seen the disciples go away the evening before without their Master, in the only boat then available; and the flotilla from Tiberias they themselves had used, and that certainly had not brought him.

It was a question of idle, perhaps half-ashamed, curiosity, to cover the real motive with which they had now sought Jesus again. His answer did not gratify them; but it laid bare in their souls what they would willingly have concealed. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled." "Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life." It was not the purpose of Jesus, or it was only a subordinate, a tributary, purpose of his, to bring material comfort into the world. His feeding of the multitude was, in his own view, less a work of beneficence than a "sign." Those missed the true advantage, who took indeed the food provided but failed to take the meaning. It was spiritual, it was eternal, not bodily, not temporal, good, that the Son of Man came chiefly to bring.

The people caught at Christ's word, "Work," and asked what would seem to have been a sanctimonious question: "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus' reply was a pointblank surprise and rebuke to their spirit of unbelief in himself: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." With incredible insensibility to the implication bound up in what Jesus had thus said, they pressed their plea for a fresh wonder from his hand. One almost blushes for them now with involuntary shame, to read with what open effrontery, with what flagrant impudence, they hinted at a repetition by him of his miracle of the day before: "What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat."

It was hopeless to deal with such a spirit as that. Cavilers, not learners, were before him, and Jesus would drive them away, rather than vainly try to win them. He propounds his hardest doctrines, and he propounds them in the most repellent form: "*I am the bread of life. . . The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.*" It was the miracle of the feeding that suggested the figure under which he thus taught; but what he thus taught was the profound, mysterious truth of his own bloody sacrifice of himself for the life of mankind. He was to be believed in, as constituting such a vicarious sacrifice; so was he to become, not to the body, but to the soul, a food nourishing the partaker to eternal life. It was a stumbling doctrine, a rock of offense. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" murmured the Jews in stubborn unbelief. Jesus did not make it easier for these hearers. "*Except,*" he reaffirmingly with emphasis said, "ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves." By this time, the scene had got itself transferred to the synagogue in Capernaum. The sifting

effect of such teaching from Jesus made itself felt even among his disciples. "This is a hard saying," many of them murmured to themselves, "who can hear it?" Jesus knowing this, condescended to intimate to them that his words were not to be taken literally, but were spirit and were life. "But there are some of you," he added sadly, "that believe not."

What he had manifestly aimed at in these teachings came to pass. His following was diminished in number. So many, indeed, of his disciples went back to walk with him no more, that the Lord turned to his twelve, and said, "Would ye also go away?" One cannot help feeling the question to be full of pathos. Did a sense of despondency weigh at that moment too heavy on the human heart of the Lord? If so, it must have been a relief when Peter made his noble reply: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." If ever words from man were welcome succor to Jesus, welcome and needed, it must have been then.

But there was a hidden pang in his bosom that no words from any could cure. What that pang was, Jesus testified when he said, "Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (The word here used by Jesus is "devil," not "demon.") Only twelve, they *chosen*—they chosen by *himself*—and one a devil! Searching words! Well for Judas had they gone to his heart, had they even sifted him then and there out of the number of the disciples! But the admonition, which might have saved, if he would be saved, did not reveal to Judas his own true self; or not so as to make him savingly recoil.

The Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes seem to have been in a chronic state of mental disturbance concerning

Jesus. They had delegations of their number in constant, or in frequent, attendance on this Galilean teacher, to watch him, to gather evidence, and to make report. Such a delegation now finds occasion of cavil in the fact that Jesus' disciples neglected certain ceremonial washings enjoined by tradition. Jesus pointed out that the inside of a man was the true seat of that man's purity or defilement. The disciples in their simplicity tell their Master that this teaching of his has offended the Pharisees. Their Master startled them by saying: "They are blind guides; let them alone." But even Peter, though not, like the Pharisees, offended, had, like them, not understood. "Declare unto us the parable," he said. The Lord was for an instant cast down. "Are ye also," he asked, "even yet without understanding?" And then he explained what to us now needs no explanation, saying: "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man."

It was fully proved that not by "signs," and not by teaching, could that generation be redeemed from themselves. The Wonder-worker, the Teacher, must become Redeemer, by blood, if the world was to be saved. It was only by being "lifted up" on the cross, that Jesus could "draw all men unto him." Still, the hour was not yet come for that; and the Lord will meantime, forsaking finally the familiar field of his labors in Middle Galilee, visit the regions to the north, skirting the borders of the Gentiles. This will interpose an interval of comparative rest, rest by retirement and change. And there must be at least a few souls there who will know the day of their visitation. Yes, and one of those few will be a heathen woman, to whom it shall be given to contribute an incomparable lesson of humility and of faith to all coming generations of mankind.

XXI

TWICE NORTHWARD IN QUEST OF SECLUSION

A CERTAIN portion of Upper or Northern Galilee early acquired the name of "Galilee of the Gentiles." This was from the fact that, having in Solomon's time been ceded to Hiram, king of Tyre, as a consideration for services rendered by that monarch to the Jewish sovereign, it drew to itself a comparatively large population of Gentile origin. Into this region Jesus now repairs.

From beyond the borders of Israel, a Canaanitish woman—"a Syrophenician," one Evangelist calls her—made her way to Jesus. She of course had a request to prefer. She preferred it in terms betokening some knowledge on her part of Jewish ideas. "Have mercy on me," she cried, "O Lord, thou Son of David!" It was mercy on herself that she invoked; and yet it was for another than herself that she pleaded. It was for one dearer than herself. She was a mother; and she prayed on behalf of a child, her daughter. That daughter, a "little" daughter, was grievously vexed with a demon. Jesus met her as there is no record that ever he met other before. He met her with absolute silence.

But the suppliant was not so to be baffled. She had recourse to the disciples, who seem to have been by themselves at this moment, apart from their Master. She clamored so that they, for very weariness of her, took up intercession in her behalf. They could not bear the din of her supplications. They came to Jesus, she probably following hard after them. "Send her away," they said. This was not so heartless on their part as it seems;

for, thus speaking, they used a Greek idiom which meant, 'Grant her request that we may be rid of her.' "She crieth after us," they complained. "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," was Jesus' reply. Whether the woman heard this, does not appear; but she flung herself down at Jesus' feet, in the worship, due from an inferior to a superior, and said, "Lord, help me." Importunate prayer may be very frugal in words.

The Lord's reply, for he spoke now, was in form very repellent, even hard-hearted. "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." That seemed to rate this suppliant woman with outcast dogs. There must have been a quality, discernible to faith, in the tone and spirit of the Speaker, that graciously belied what he said. The woman was happily equal to the occasion and to her own need. "Yea, Lord," she began. This did not assent to the Lord's apparent repulse, gently gainsaid it rather. 'O yes, it is meet,' it seemed to plead; "for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." It was as if she had said: 'I am willing to take my place with the dogs, if thou wilt have me so do; but even so, drop me a crumb as to a dog crouched under its master's table.' The Lord was fairly overcome; surprised, one might almost say, into a burst of glad admiration. He had carried his test to its utmost bound, and the woman had borne it triumphantly. "O woman," said Jesus, "great is thy faith: be it done unto thee, even as thou wilt." "And her daughter was healed from that hour."

Jesus had aimed at retirement in making this northern excursion. Mark says: "He entered into a house [some hospitable friend's house, probably], and would have no man know it. And he could not be hid." The case of the Syrophenician woman's daughter no doubt became known, and the fresh notoriety resulting drove the

Saviour to withdraw still farther northward. He made a wide circuit. He visited Sidon first; then, in his round-about homeward way, traversing the district called Decapolis, he came back to his favorite Sea of Galilee on its eastern side. Here, the customary scenes of healing repeat themselves, in number too great to be separately described. A multitude was fed again, the circumstances being much the same as on the former occasion. Four thousand (instead of five thousand) men, besides women and children, were this time supplied with food by a multiplication of seven loaves (instead of five) and a few small fishes. The fragments remaining over filled seven baskets (instead of twelve). These details of difference between the two occasions (a less number of people, and a greater number of loaves), are interesting as attesting the sobriety and the careful truth of the two narratives.

As on the previous occasion of miraculous feeding of the multitude, Jesus took care to dismiss and disperse the throng. He then, in a boat with his disciples, went to the opposite side of the lake. Here the Pharisees harried him with their insulting demand of a "sign" from heaven. They perhaps wanted a "sign" given them under conditions which they should themselves prescribe; a sign that would satisfy their unbelieving tests. Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit and declared that there should be no sign given to that generation. And once more he retreats to refuge in his boat, and vibrates back yet again to the other side of the lake. On the way, he warns his disciples against the "leaven" of the Pharisees. Those strange disciples misunderstood him. They took him literally. They said, "It is because we have no bread"—they having in fact but a single loaf on board. "Do ye not yet understand?" wearily asked the Lord. He finally made them perceive that he meant the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

It is noteworthy that both Matthew and Mark, in re-

ording the Saviour's return, after his encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees, to the eastern side of the lake, say, "he left them"—that is, left the Pharisees and Sadducees. What with the persecutions of these enemies on the one hand, and the dangerous enthusiasms of the people on the other, he was in sore need of escape and relief—till his "hour" should come.

This escape and relief he sought in another excursion to the north. A public man of our time needing retirement and rest has always open to him some available recourse. He can take ship and flee across sea; or he can take a train and in a few hours penetrate to some recess of country withdrawn from popular approach and observation. Far otherwise was it in his day with Jesus of Nazareth. There was no accessible refuge for him from the persecuting pursuit of his own notoriety. He might travel, but he must travel on foot; and he could not travel fast enough or far enough to outrun the people that would spring up everywhere at his heels to follow him with their importunities for help.

He had no sooner set out once more, his face turned northward again, in recoil from the contact and offense of the Pharisees and Sadducees, than he was met at Bethsaida by the case of a blind man to be healed. Jesus cannot resist the pathetic appeal of that need and that faith. He, however, takes the blind man by the hand, and, in the way of such precaution as is possible against the publicity that he seeks to avoid, leads him out of the village. He there spat on his eyes and asked him, "Seest thou aught?" That was as if the Healer did not expect the cure to be at once perfect. The blind man said he beheld men as trees walking. Next came a touch of the healing hand on his eyes, which completed the restoration of sight. Jesus then sent the man, no longer blind, away to his home, with the charge, "Do not even enter into the village." He thus did what he

could to keep the man from temptation to publish his experience and his cure.

The Bethsaida here meant is the village so named on the eastern side of the lake. There was a village of the same name on the western side. But Jesus was now on his way northward to Cæsarea Philippi, where was the Fountain of the Jordan. The spot is picturesque, the fountain itself being one of the most striking features of Palestinian scenery. But no note is made by the Evangelists to warrant our supposing that the Saviour paid particular heed, here or elsewhere, to the romantic or beautiful aspects of nature. In mere sentiment, esthetic or other, Jesus seems to have indulged very sparingly.

But while they fared along, he and his disciples, he asked them a question such as, from any other than he, might seem to savor of a somewhat morbid self-consciousness, even vanity. He asked them, "Who do men say that I am?" They reported; and then he asked them, "But who say ye that I am?" True to his character, Peter was prompt to reply. "Thou art the Christ of God," he said. This no doubt was what the Lord wished to elicit; and it was in preparation for eliciting it that he had begun with the question first asked. He however strictly "charged them" and "commanded them" to tell it to no man.

To Peter he now spoke words that have been made the subject of unending discussion. Jesus saw that Peter must have got his perfectly clear discernment of the true person and character of his Master by direct revelation from God himself. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah!" he impressively said; "Bar-Jonah" meaning son of Jonah, or of John. He then added: "And I also say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt

bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

What do these words mean? Roman Catholics say, that Jesus made Peter prince of the apostles and head of the church, in fact, vicar of God. On this interpretation for its corner-stone, the institution of the papacy is founded. Protestants explain the words variously; but always, of course, in a sense not admitting the claim of Roman Catholicism. In seeking the truth on this topic, one ought to consider that the binding and loosing power, whatever that is, here given to Peter, is elsewhere given by Jesus in the same words to all the apostles in common. "Binding" and "loosing" are customary Jewish expressions for "prohibiting" on the one hand, and "permitting" on the other. The thing, therefore, that Jesus here meant was, to bestow on Peter (and, with him, on all his fellow apostles) the privilege and the responsibility of teaching authoritatively in his name what was right and what was wrong: in other words, what was "loosed" or permitted, and what was "bound" or prohibited.

Peter's name, meaning "rock," naturally suggested to Jesus the figure of building, when he spoke of his church. Peter had just made the first absolutely clear and positive confession of Jesus as Christ that ever was made by man. He, therefore, might well be represented as beginning the church of Christ; in other words, as constituting in this sense its corner-stone, that stone being the one first laid when a building is erected. On Peter, therefore, as on the first stone laid in it, Jesus would found and rear his church. Such seems to be the obvious, the natural, the sufficient and exhaustive, meaning of the figure in which Jesus here expressed himself, when he declared that on the rock, Peter, his church should be built.

The giving to Peter of the "keys to the kingdom of heaven"—what does that import? Perhaps no more than a repetition, in a kind of Hebrew parallelism, of the idea

already conveyed. But let us inquire. And first, What is to be understood by the expression, "kingdom of heaven"? "Kingdom of God" is an alternative expression of the same idea. To begin with, it does *not* mean a place; in other words, it is not equivalent to "heaven." The chief element in the idea of any kingdom is a community of persons who are subjects of a king. Human souls obedient to God as King constitute the "kingdom of God" on earth. It is the earthly counterpart of what exists above; it is, in this sense, the "kingdom of heaven." For the establishment of such a kingdom Jesus taught his disciples to pray, in those words of his supplied to them for their use in prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Of this kingdom, anybody becomes a member who simply obeys God as King. This community of souls obedient to God, constituting as such God's kingdom, may be conceived under the figure of a city with gates. Whoever possesses the secret of obedience to God, has, simply in virtue of that qualification, the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Is there good reason to believe that the keys of the kingdom were given to Peter in any other sense than that in which they are given to every one who does as Peter did, namely, sees and acknowledges Jesus in his character of the Christ of God? Peter, however, by his *priority* in confession, might, in the important sense of first example, be accounted the one to open the gates of the kingdom of heaven to all who should afterward enter it, as he entered it, by the way of obedience to Jesus Christ, the Vicegerent of God. If we were to seek any sense for the words different from that already proposed, we should find a very natural one in understanding that Jesus meant to accord to Peter the privilege of opening the gospel dispensation; as in fact he did, for the Jews, on the day of Pentecost, for the Gentiles, in his interview with Cornelius.

The saying is a remarkable saying; but the foregoing interpretation is submitted in full conviction on my own part that it fairly meets the demands of the language employed by the Lord. The allusion to Hades is too noteworthy to be overlooked. The meaning probably is that the church of Christ shall continue to exist, undisturbed by the circumstance of death, whether the death of its Founder or the death of its members; in short, that the date of its continuing to exist takes in not only this world, but not less, also the world to come.

This whole passage of conversation between Jesus and his disciples seems to mark a transition in the direction and aim of his teaching. From this time onward, he addresses himself, not exclusively, but mainly, to the task of intimate instruction to the inner circle of his followers. The understanding between himself and them is assumed to be complete; and he now begins to unfold to them certain of the truths more difficult to receive concerning himself. Of these, chief was the fact that he must go to Jerusalem, must there suffer many things at the hands of his enemies, and finally be put to death. He always added that the third day he should rise again. Matthew, himself one of the twelve, says that he "*from that time began to show*" these things to his disciples.

This language implies that he foretold his own death and resurrection—not simply once, or twice, or thrice, but repeatedly. We have the record of many repetitions of this momentous announcement; but the repetitions were evidently far more numerous than are the separate notes of them. Jesus, therefore, fully committed himself to the prediction, not only that he should be killed, but that in three days he should rise from the dead. Indeed, he may be said to have staked everything upon that future fact. If the fact failed, if he did not rise, as he said he would rise, from the dead, nothing could possibly save his credit among men. He would necessarily rank, and

he would well deserve to rank, as at the best a weak and misguided enthusiast; as at the worst a conscious and incredibly foolish impostor—an impostor who needlessly himself provided an inevitable speedy exposure of his own false pretensions.

Peter, alas, seems to have been lifted up unduly by the extraordinary things that Jesus had just said to him in the presence of his fellow apostles. He prepared for himself a prompt rebuke and humiliation from his Master, as signal as had been his late commendation. Peter took it upon himself to give his Master a point of advice and remonstrance! The idea of the Lord's suffering shame and death, and of his announcing this future as in store for himself precisely at the moment when he, Peter, might fairly be expecting great things to his own profit from his new dignity in holding the keys to the kingdom soon to be established—such an idea was too great a downfall of ambition and hope. Peter "took" Jesus and "began to rebuke him."

The misguided man must have made a somewhat formal thing of it. He meant to have it impressive. It became indeed impressive, but in a way and in a sense that Peter little expected. Jesus turned and gave a significant look toward the circle of waiting disciples. It was a crucial moment for Peter. But the suspense could not have been felt so severely as were the words that followed. The Lord said to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." This, to the apostle that had lately been so distinguished with praise! It was a cruel fall—all the more cruel that it was so richly deserved—to the pride and presumption of Peter.

The Evangelist Mark makes no mention of the extraordinary praise addressed by Christ to Peter; while the terrible reproof thus visited upon the offending apostle is spread out at large on his record. The circumstance be-

comes remarkable to us, and most instructive, when we consider that Peter was probably himself the source and authority to his "son" (that is, convert) Mark for the writing of his Gospel. Peter had at length grown such in character that he was not careful to have his own glory commemorated, while willing to let appear his own folly and pride, and therewith the awful rebuke that these earned for himself from the Master.

Thus far the conversation has, on the present occasion, been strictly between Jesus and his apostles. Now Jesus calls the multitude near, and to them, together with the apostles, says: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself [this doubtless was a further rebuke to Peter, besides being an admonition to all who, as Peter appears to have just been doing, regard, instead of disregarding, self], and take up his cross, and follow me." "To take up the cross" must, to those who had just heard Jesus foretell his own death, have meant nothing less than to be willing to incur crucifixion—as the Master himself was willing.

Hard terms of discipleship? Yes; but there were gracious promises in paradox annexed: "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it"; "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds." These were astounding assertions. Jesus added another not less astounding. "Verily I say unto you," he declared, in his own solemn manner, "there be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." There was to follow soon an event which those three favored apostles who were permitted to witness it would find well adapted to confirm their faith, if their faith had perhaps been in any degree shaken by sayings from Christ of such incomprehensible, such magnificent, such momentous, import.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

THE event just alluded to occurred after an interval of six days. The three chosen apostles present to witness it were Peter, James, and John. These Jesus takes with him, and goes up into a solitary mountain of great height. What mountain this was, we cannot with certainty determine. The fact that Jesus, with his disciples, was apparently still in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, makes it probable that it was a part of Mount Hermon rising directly from this point. In that lofty and lonely spot, there was shown to those witnesses a spectacle such as they could see indeed with dazzled eyes and minds in ecstasy; but such as neither they nor any mortal could describe. It was a momentary glimpse on earth of heavenly glory. Jesus prayed; and as he prayed he became a different person in appearance. He was transfigured before the apostles. His face shone as the sun, and his raiment became white and glistening, like apparel of pure light; he was "robed in dazzling immortality." Nothing could be imagined better adapted to convey to those beholders an idea of the proper majesty of that veiled incarnate God, with whom, not knowing him, they had walked and talked so freely.

What then and there occurred was not addressed to the eye alone. Two glorified visitants from the unseen world appeared and held audible converse with the transfigured Son of Man. These two were Moses the giver, and Elijah the restorer, of the law. Many ages before, they had each of them passed away from the world of men in a mystery; and now in a mystery they both returned again, to show themselves for a moment,

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and disappear. We know what was the subject of their conversation. It was the decease which Jesus was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. The three apostles were all of them bewildered and afraid; but Peter felt that he must say something, and not well knowing what it ought to be, nor indeed what it was when he said it, he ventured on this: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." This was at the point of time when the two visitants to Jesus were in the act of parting from him. While he was yet speaking, a tabernacle not made with hands, a tabernacle from God, overshadowed them. It was a shadow, not of darkness, but of light; a "bright cloud" it is called by Matthew. But it no doubt had the effect of darkness upon those unaccustomed eyes, which must have been blinded by the glory. Already afraid as that cloud, "dark with excessive bright," enveloped them, the disciples fell on their faces, quite overcome with fear, when out of the cloud came a voice, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Jesus came and touched the fallen disciples and said, "Arise, and be not afraid." What reassuring words from One so attested from heaven! The disciples suddenly looked round about. They saw no one any more, save Jesus only.

Luke tells us that the three apostles were heavy with sleep during some part of the time occupied by this incident. This, with other indications, suggests that the transfiguration occurred at night. The occasion was perhaps one more of those night vigils of prayer which the Lord so frequently observed. We are at liberty to suppose that the conversation between Jesus and his visitants may have been somewhat prolonged. Perhaps those immortalized human brethren of the Lord were commissioned from God to make more clearly known to the suffering Messiah what awaited him at Jerusalem.

Jesus charged Peter, James, and John not to reveal what they had thus seen and heard. They obediently held their peace—"in those days"; the silence enjoined need last only till the resurrection of Jesus. While they were coming down from the mount, the Master spoke again of the rising from the dead which was to follow his suffering and death in Jerusalem; but he spoke to hearers who could not take in the meaning of what he then said.

From the mind of one at least among the witnesses of the Transfiguration, the vividness of the vision never faded. Long after, Peter, in his so-called Second Epistle, wrote thus in allusion to what on that occasion he saw: "We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." Such language is proof, if proof were needed, of the confirming effect produced on his faith by that experience of Peter's. But not on Peter alone did the impression of the transfiguration of Jesus thus deeply and brightly abide. John also doubtless had this revelation in mind when he wrote, "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father."

Such testimonies well deserve a high place among the still living and ever-imperishable evidences of Christianity.

From the Mount of Transfiguration to the levels at its foot, was a descent and transition; but it feebly symbolized the abrupt difference between the glory of what the three disciples had just beheld, and the sorrow of

what was awaiting their return to the plain. This was a case of human misery in one of its most distressing forms. The disciples had tried and had failed to relieve it; and the scribes were pressing them with questions. Jesus cured the sufferer, who was a boy, and gave him back to his father.

“All were astonished at the majesty of God.” This descriptive note from Luke stimulates the imagination to conceive that some particular transfiguration still remained in effect, to make the port and appearance of Jesus majestic, after that experience of his on the mount. It would seem also as if the glimpse of his native heaven enjoyed by him there, made the renewed contact of earthly imperfection and sin unusually hard to him to endure. He had perhaps never before evinced a spirit so nearly approaching impatience, as when, now, upbraiding his disciples for the lack of faith that had occasioned their failure, he exclaimed, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear you?”

If he felt so concerning his disciples, what must have been the trial of spirit endured by the sinless Redeemer in encounter with his unbelieving, gainsaying, persecuting, murderous enemies!

XXIII

INTERMISSION

AFTER the Transfiguration, with its sequel and contrast in that scene at the foot of the mountain, there intervened a period of uncertain length, during which the preaching activity of Jesus was intermitted. It was apparently a time of comparative retirement and rest to the Lord. He had, in a measure at least, succeeded in veiling himself from the public. It may well be that, after such innumerable cures effected by him, there did not remain in the land cases enough of crying physical need, accompanied with the requisite faith, to keep up popular enthusiasm, of importunity and of curiosity, to the height of excitement that had previously for many months prevailed. Jesus could devote himself to the quiet instruction of his apostles.

The first thing mentioned in the course of this private instruction was another return, on the Teacher's part, to the topic of his own impending sufferings, death, and subsequent resurrection. It is pathetically noticeable that he taught these things to his disciples much as if he felt that he would be teaching in vain. He said: "*Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of Man shall be delivered up into the hands of men.*" And indeed he did teach to a great extent in vain. Concerning this very communication, Luke says: "They understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it: and they were afraid to ask him about this saying." And yet how explicit he had made it! Mark gives it more fully than Luke, adding: "And they shall kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again."

What could be plainer? And they did understand enough to be, as Matthew says, "exceeding sorry." But it needed the actual accomplished fact to make the Lord's meaning fully clear. If the fact had not followed, the prediction would of course never have been understood; nor, also of course, would it ever have been recorded. It testifies to the unalterable sanity and sobriety of spirit, steadfastly maintained at this time by Jesus against the naturally exalting effect of an experience on his part like the Transfiguration, followed by that easy and absolute triumph of his over the powers of evil at the foot of the mountain, that, while the awe of astonishment at him was still casting unbroken its spell on the minds of observers, he himself, on the other hand, was capable of calmly discoursing on the subject of the unspeakable agony and shame that awaited him.

Another proof of the same equipoise in him was his conduct when the question of the "half-shekel" came up. The half-shekel was a tax for the temple, payable in Hebrew coin only, and due from every male Israelite of age. The collectors asked Peter, "Doth not your Master pay the half-shekel?" Peter said, Yes. But when he came into the house, Jesus was beforehand with him in speaking on the subject. Claiming to be justly exempt on the ground of his divine sonship, he yet at the same time paid the tax, and *so* paid it as to show his own inherent right to be free. He bade Peter go to the lake—he was now at Capernaum—and cast a hook for a fish. In the first fish's mouth Peter should find a shekel, which would discharge both the disciple and the Master.

The twelve disciples were by no means free from the common human infirmities. They were at once slow-witted in things of the spirit, and ambitiously eager each one for preeminence. The idea of "kingdom," about which they heard so much and understood so little, turned their heads. They disputed among themselves which one of them all was to be the greatest in that

kingdom. Jesus knew what was going on in their hearts, and he gave them a lesson, which, as effective as it was simple, has become immortal and universal in fame. He took a little child and set him by his side, and said, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Childish those disciples had been in their contention; they were to be childlike instead. Jesus took the little child up in his arms as he said this, making a picture forever dear to the imagination, the memory, and the heart, of mankind.

The instructions given by Jesus to his confidential disciples, during this period of comparatively secluded sojourn in Galilee precedent to his final withdrawal from that region, must here, as being not exactly to the purpose of these sketches, be left for the most part to be studied in the text itself of the Gospels where they are recorded; the controlling object of the present work is rather narration, than interpretation or commentary. Priceless instructions they were, so simple in form, so profound in meaning, so sententious, so brief but so dense with suggestion—inexhaustible fountains of practical wisdom for the nurture and culture of the life of the soul. The eighteenth chapter of Matthew, for example, contains a rule of conduct from Christ for cases of disagreement arising between brother and brother, which, it may safely be said, would, if carried out in life, do more to transform the face of society than all the ethical and social wisdom of the world besides. And that instruction to Peter on the duty of forgiveness! "How often shall I forgive?" asked Peter. "Until seven times?" he added; seeing already perhaps in Jesus' eyes a meaning which he made haste to meet by putting the requisite number, as he thought, high, at "seven times." "Not until seven times, but until seventy times seven," said Jesus. He then, by way of enforcement, added his parable of the debtors, with that solemn con-

clusion, "So [that is, in strict, stern justice, devoid of mercy] shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

John tells us Jesus' reason for his sojourn in Galilee. "He would not walk in Judea, because the Jews [the Jewish rulers] sought to kill him." The same reason influenced him to lead his life as much as might be in quiet. He would not hasten on prematurely his "hour." The feast of Tabernacles was approaching, and Jesus' own brothers, then not believers in him (strange, and yet not strange!), prompted him to visit Judea, and work miracles there. Judea was "the world" to those Galilean provincials, and Jesus ought to manifest himself to the world. Jesus calmly said, "My time is not yet come." He went, however; but in a quiet manner to avoid publicity. The city was full of talk and rumor about Jesus.

At the height of the feast, the Lord went into the temple, that is, into the temple enclosure, and there taught. Some said, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill?" The rulers were nonplussed. They sought to take Jesus; and they did not take him, though there he was openly before them. John explains why. "His hour was not yet come." That strange man, bearing that strangely guarded life, went on teaching. And officers, it seems, were sent to arrest him. They came back without their prisoner. "Why did ye not bring him?" the rulers disappointed asked. "Never man so spake," was, so far as the record goes, the officers' only reply.

The story of the woman taken in adultery is not now regarded as belonging in the true text of the Gospel of John. This does not necessarily indicate that the story is false; but it is sufficiently doubtful for us to pass it here, though it teaches a lesson that seems characteristic of Jesus.

To this part of the life of Jesus pertain those passages of discourse—discourse become, through human per-

verseness, almost altercation—between Jesus and the hostile Jews, which are recorded in the eighth chapter of John. The paradox under which Jesus obscured his instructions to these resisting hearers, constitutes a striking example of his use of this method in teaching. Most majestic were the claims that he made for himself. They should have overawed the listeners; but the listeners were only exasperated by them. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad,” said Jesus. “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” caviled the Jews. They of course put his age at the extreme limit of possibility, probably almost a score of years beyond the truth. Jesus said to them, with that divine phrase of his, confirming his words, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” The Jews made their last reply by taking up stones to cast at him. But Jesus was hidden; and, veiled from them, he went out of the temple.

XXIV

TO GUESTSHIP AT BETHANY

THE time at length arrived for the last farewell from the Lord to his home in Galilee. Jesus had perhaps returned thither from the feast of Tabernacles; but if so, it was only to take leave of it now forever. A yearning prophetic spirit in him, a spirit of welcome for his end, urged him irresistibly on to Jerusalem and to the cross. "When the days were well-nigh come," Luke says, "that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." (Was it conscious literary art in Luke, or was it fine nature in him snatching a grace beyond the reach of art, that led him to employ that euphemism of his, "that he should be received up"—passing thus in silence the intervening agony and shame, and going at once in thought to the ascension and the glory?) Great multitudes followed him, and once more, according to his former wont, he taught them. He also healed the sick along his way. It seems to have been at first in the Saviour's mind to take his way through Samaria. In pursuance of this purpose, he despatched to a certain Samaritan village which he would naturally pass in his journey, forerunners to prepare entertainment for himself and his disciples. The villagers refused him hospitality, for the reason that he was obviously bound to Jerusalem—as we here assume, for the observance of the feast of Dedication.

James and John had been styled by Jesus "Sons of Thunder." They now showed their fitness to bear the name. They said, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven to consume them?" They got a rebuke for their answer. The Lord went with his

disciples to another village. Not to have received such a guest was in itself a sufficient punishment for not receiving him. The "other village" was perhaps one on the Galilean border, not in Samaria. If such was the case, Jesus may now have taken a course on the line dividing Galilee from Samaria, traveling east till, having reached the Jordan, he crossed it into Perea (the lower part of eastern Palestine). This furnishes a possible explanation of that expression in Luke, "he was passing through the midst of [that is, on the border line, between] Samaria and Galilee." It is right, however, to say that this conclusion is doubtful. Some painstaking students of the life of the Lord think that Jesus, notwithstanding this first repulse, continued his journey through Samaria; and that there was a subsequent general tour of ministry made by him "through the midst" of both Samaria and Galilee. It is a case in which no certain conclusion is possible.

The Lord, with his train, was walking along the way, when a scribe offered to be of his company. Then it was that Jesus, having now forsaken his home in Capernaum, and being without prospect of other home to be his anywhere on earth, uttered that pathetic saying, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Perhaps the spurning that he had suffered from that inhospitable Samaritan village heightened in his human heart his sense of utter homelessness. The saying seems to have been meant to give the scribe warning how little was to be hoped for of earthly gain from following such a teacher. To another man, Jesus, with discrimination not accounted for, and perhaps not to be accounted for save by the supposition of sovereign choice on the speaker's own part, said, "Follow me." This man seemed to hesitate. "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," he said. "Leave the dead to bury their own dead," said the Lord, in his way of paradox; "but

go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God." *Nothing* was to take precedence of a call to duty coming from Christ. This principle was enforced a second time on the same journey by a similar reply given in a second similar case. His own absolute lordship over human souls could not have been more emphatically insisted upon than it was by Christ.

It was probably during the journey now in progress to Jerusalem, that Jesus selected out of the number of his disciples seventy in addition to the twelve apostles, and sent them forth to preach. They were to visit in advance of himself the cities and villages through which he was about to pass. In the course of the instructions, resembling those to the twelve apostles, which he gave to these seventy missionary heralds of his, he entered upon a remarkable strain of retrospect and denunciation. He must have been reviewing in his own mind the cycle on cycle of wonderful works, ended at last, with which he had favored those cities of Galilee now left behind him perhaps forever. With the review, there swept over him the thought how little all had profited them. He began to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin!" And there follows that dread succession of "Woes!"—thrice dread, as issuing from those lips of grieved and indignant grace.

"And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in thy name." "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven," the Lord, as in a trance of prophecy, replied. A glorious vision, to gladden the soul of the Redeemer—a vision of the future blending with the present; he saw the shaken principdom of this world cast out its prince. The joy of the seventy was responded to by joy also in the heart of the Master. It is like seeing a beam of pure light shot out of a gathering cloud, which parts for an instant

to let it forth, when one reads this record, "In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit." That Son's joy was toward his Father; it turned into thanks. Jesus said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." He was perfectly well-content, he was sympathetically glad, he was obediently thankful, that God had seen fit to give him his disciples of the lowly and the humble. And what encouragement still it remains to the lowly and the humble, that to them, not less than to the great of the earth, God through Christ loves to reveal himself and the wonders of his ways!

"Come unto me," so runs the rhythmic invitation from the lips of the Lord, making for itself a lovely tune in whatever human language—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This follows immediately upon his giving of thanks to God that God's chosen were such as they were. "Take my yoke"—the yoke that I place, or the yoke that I wear, they are one and the same, it is the yoke of obedience—"take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." When ever did any other "meek and lowly" one so claim that grace of spirit? The claim itself would, in any other than Jesus, be its own refutation; but in him, it is so fit and so true that we have to rouse ourselves with an effort even to notice it as strange; and the result is that it does not seem strange after all. The great Teacher by paradox was himself the greatest of paradoxes. And what additional paradox is this fact concerning him, namely, that his paradoxical character (as well as his paradoxical method) indisputable as it is, yet so little appears! And—still another paradox!—the Meek and Lowly in heart is the same that majestically says: "I am the light of the world"; "No man cometh unto the Father but by me"; "I and the Father are one."

We do not know where it was, but at about this time, a lawyer, not named, stood up and asked the Master a prepared question. The lawyer's purpose was not teachably to learn, but captiously to test. "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" It was a good question, however ill asked. Jesus replied with a question in turn. "What is written in the law?" The lawyer made an excellent answer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Nothing could be better as a summation in small of the whole law of God. Jesus accepted it, and told the lawyer, "This do, and thou shalt live." The caviler was not satisfied to leave the matter in that state. He was a bright-minded man; and he saw a possible way to what he wanted in a little more cavil. "And who is my neighbor?" he asked. Jesus answered with the famous parable of the Good Samaritan; in which he taught that anybody near enough to us for us to help, is, in the spirit of the law of God, to be reckoned our "neighbor."

The Lord has now reached, not Jerusalem indeed, but a suburb of that city bearing a familiar name, name dear by sacred association to every Christian heart; it is the village of Bethany. Here a woman received him into her house; by that act of hospitality commencing perhaps a relationship to Jesus which has made her one of the best-known women in the world. The woman's name was Martha; and she had a sister called Mary, of whom it is said that she now "sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word." A glimpse most unexpectedly comes to us here of the inner domestic life of that household. Martha is so put about with her cares as hostess, that she is fain even to make appeal for relief to her Guest. Mary, her sister, did not help her so much as Martha thought she should! In her distraction of spirit, Martha almost blamed the Master himself. "Lord, carest thou

not that my sister left me to serve alone?" How tenderly the Lord at the same time soothed that ruffled mind and chided her as in error and fault! There was affectionate admonitory repetition of Martha's name—one can almost hear through it the sympathetic undulation of the voice—"Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things."

"Many things"—what does that expression mean? Does it mean that Martha had a divided mind, oscillating uneasily between care on the one hand for what was less important and attention on the other hand to the chief matter of the soul? Or does it simply mean that Martha had too much housewife's bustling desire to make various provision for the table—to have a good assortment of different dishes to tempt the appetite? Jesus added, "But one thing is needful." If we adopt the latter of the foregoing interpretations, then Jesus will appear to be assuring Martha that a single dish would be ample provision. But Jesus added again, "For Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." This favors the higher, the allegorical, interpretation of the Saviour's language. It seems to teach that Mary's posture as learner at the Lord's feet was better than Martha's excessive zeal to furnish that Lord with material hospitality. Perhaps Jesus saw, though delicately he refrained from saying, that Martha's ambition was too self-regarding, animated with overmuch desire to acquit herself well in her character of hostess.

Jesus will find here, in this home at Bethany, that comfort of love which his human heart will full surely need during the days of trial for him now so near at hand. And he will richly overpay for all, not only with such society as no other guest ever brought to a human habitation; but also with a work of wonder in repair of bereavement, surpassing anything that even he before had anywhere wrought.

It is impossible, from the records supplied to us in the Gospels, to follow with assured exactness the movements of Jesus belonging to this time, in their true relative order of occurrence. On some occasion, we know not what, perhaps it was while passing in one direction or the other between Bethany and Jerusalem—John simply says, “as he passed by”—Jesus saw a man blind from his birth. The disciples were prompted to ask a deep question. “Rabbi,” they said, “who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?” Jesus told them, Neither; and then, declining all speculative consideration of the point raised, addressed himself to a practical purpose befitting his character.

His method, however, of procedure in the case—did that befit his character? Probably no one of us would antecedently, on his own judgment, have thought of choosing for Jesus such a mode of procedure as he here chose for himself. But whatever he did became, by the mere fact of his doing it, fit. He spat on the ground, and making clay of the spittle anointed the man’s eyes with the unguent so produced. He then said to the man, “Go wash in the pool of Siloam.” The man did so and came back seeing.

A healing virtue in this earthen unguent, the blind man might perhaps easily have trusted. But why the pool of Siloam as a place for the bathing? The direction was at least a test of his faith. The cure was wrought on a Sabbath Day. It made a great stir among the Jewish rulers. Some officious persons seem to have taken the man to those self-appointed guardians of tradition, the Pharisees, as a testimony against Jesus. There was much bandying of words between the man and his Pharisee inquisitors. He seems to have had a good share of mother wit and withal some true courage and faith. The final issue was both ill and well for the man. On the one hand, he believed in Jesus as the Son of God; but “they” “cast him out,” that is, thrust him out

of their company—a social exclusion that may, or may not, have been followed by the severer sentence of expulsion from the synagogue.

John reports for us various discourses of Jesus that must have been spoken at about the time of this healing; among these, that one in which he represents himself, now as the door to the sheepfold, and now as Shepherd of the sheep. In the course of it, he teaches the truths of his own vicarious death, and of his own victorious resurrection, saying, “I lay down my life for the sheep. . . No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” These words worked no doubt their intended effect; they sifted his hearers. Some believed, and some rejected; but more rejected.

It was winter, the winter before the spring that should see the end of that heavenly life on earth. Jesus, walking in the part of the temple which bore the name of Solomon’s porch, was assailed by his enemies with a question which they evidently meant should precipitate an immediate issue. “How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.” Probably they put their emphasis on the word “plainly.” This implied that they had already well enough understood him to claim Messiahship. But they wanted something more unequivocal in form, something that would better serve as technical witness against him. Jesus said, “I told you, and you believe not.” He then appealed from his words to his works: “The works that I do in my Father’s name, these bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice.” Another sifting sentence.

The hostile Jews were stung to madness. Again they took up stones to stone him. This was on his uttering the words, “I and the Father are one.” Jesus calmly said: “Many good works have I showed you from the

Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?" But the Jews insisted it was not for his works, but for certain of his words, for his blasphemy in making himself God. And the strife went on, till they once more sought to take him. "And he went forth out of their hand." *How*, they, though eye-witnesses, could not have told; and it is not explained by John. Still, Jesus seems to have thought it the part of wisdom to withdraw himself again for the present from these contacts with enemies. He retired beyond Jordan to the place where he was baptized by John the Baptist, and there took up his temporary residence. But he was not left to himself; for many came to him there. And many believed on him.

XXV

DISCOURSES UNDATED

LUKE is alone in gathering together a number of discourses from the Lord, the exact place or the exact time of which he furnishes us no clue for determining. By comparison, however, of the accounts given by the other Evangelists, we conclude that they belong to the journey through Perea (or through Samaria) to Jerusalem. "Journey" we may say; for Luke in effect reduces to a single one the two or three journeys apparently indicated by his fellow historians. This is no real conflict, but only a difference of representation. Luke finds his unity by simply regarding the grand purpose with which Jesus set out, for the last time, from Capernaum for Jerusalem, as unifying all the Lord's movements following that, up to the moment when he finally entered the Holy City, not to go out again except to Calvary and the Cross. The teachings now referred to, which Luke alone reports, may be called "discourses undated," and may under that title be grouped here for such brief notice as consists with the plan of this work.

One of them is a kind of parable. Regular parable it is not; it is rather a question with a supposition. The design of the instruction in it is to impress the importance of persistent importunity in prayer. A man is represented as roused at midnight by application at his door from a friend, who requests the loan of some loaves, to entertain a guest of his unexpectedly arrived. The sleeper is lazily reluctant to get up, but he does so at last, rather than be dinned with continued beseeching. The argument is, that much more will indefatigable continuance in prayer prevail with God.

Again. Jesus is called by a Pharisee to dinner. The host of the occasion is scandalized to see that his guest neglects the customary ceremonial "washing" before the meal. The Pharisee must, one would suppose, have said something to invoke the severity of rebuke that he experienced from the Lord. For the Lord, guest though he was, opened a volley of indignant denunciation against the Pharisees as a class. He expressly involved his own host among them, his form of words being, "Woe unto you, Pharisees!" The language to which this constitutes at once prelude and refrain, is fearfully condemnatory. It is in short such language as is not reconcilable with the comity ordinarily required by the relation of guest to host. One justifies it only on the ground of a character in Jesus quite transcending the limits of common humanity. One of the lawyers present drew down the avalanche of rebuke on his own head through a deprecatory remark, "Master, in saying this, thou reproachest us also." Jesus launched thereupon into an almost heavier reprobation of the lawyers.

The alternative created by such conduct on the part of Jesus was a rigorous one. Either those who were thus denounced to their face would be overawed into submission, or they would be maddened to murderous hatred. The latter result took place. Jesus' enemies waited only for a suitable occasion to bring the power of the law to bear upon him. They had for months been exerting their ingenuity to entrap him in some overt expression that should make him liable to the penalty of death. They now did so with energy redoubled, in sequel to those stern utterances of his at the Pharisee's table.

But the people crowding round him seem for the moment to have choked off, with mere multitude, these adversaries of Jesus. The Lord made, as it were, an appeal from the Pharisees themselves to the mass of the people. For he now denounced the Pharisees publicly. This at least seems to be the case; although Luke

does indeed say that he addressed himself "to his disciples, first of all." "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," he said. "Hypocrisy" is the acting of a part. The Pharisees were acting a part. They pretended to be moved by zeal for religion; they really were moved by zeal for themselves. That last calamity of the hypocrite, they succeeded perhaps in imposing upon their own consciences.

A man of the crowd spoke up most inopportune. He wanted this all-powerful Teacher to intervene on his behalf in a matter of disputed inheritance. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" severely asked the Lord. The emphasis is not on "me"; but on the words "judge" and "divider." The function of Jesus was not such as those words would imply. But the inopportune interruption was in a sense opportune. For it became the occasion of a parable from the Lord to illustrate the futility of worldly wealth. It is the parable of the poor rich man who was not "rich toward God." There followed those precious teachings to the disciples concerning a life freed from care through trust in God. These seem to be in part repeated from the Sermon on the Mount. A forewarning strain intermingles. The Lord looks forward to that crisis for Jerusalem which after his own death would involve in the general ruin many surviving from that very generation. "Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh," was the solemn closing word.

Peter asked concerning this, whether it was for the apostles, or for all. We are thus warranted in conceiving that what the Lord from time to time said was occasionally meant for the special benefit of the circle of disciples immediately about him, though spoken openly in the hearing of the promiscuous multitude. Jesus did not answer Peter, except in terms to leave the point in some salutary doubt. The disciples, however, were given to understand that their own responsibility would be

great and peculiar. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required," the Lord said. The somber shadow of his own agony to come is cast by anticipation backward upon the Saviour's spirit. He welcomes it with a tense and solemn joy: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" He is divided between two opposite inward constraints: one, a constraint to hasten on the coming inevitable hour; the other, a constraint to wait patiently till that hour was fully come.

It was by an impressive coincidence that, "at that very season," when he was occupied with such foretokenings at once of the doom overhanging himself and of the later doom overhanging Jerusalem, he should be told of certain Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. With that tragical incident, he associated another like it in melancholy character, namely, the recent killing of eighteen persons by the falling of a tower. "Think ye," said Jesus, "that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Not "also" perish, but perish "likewise"; that is, with a similar violent destruction. It was a prophetic glance forward to that dreadful destruction of Jerusalem which was to occur less than forty years after. That actually did involve the whole population of the land crowded together within the city walls—all except those who "repented" and heeded betimes the warnings of Jesus. No Christians, it is said, perished in that dire cataclysm of national calamity. On the same occasion, and with the same purpose, Jesus gave his parable of the Barren Fig-Tree, which was later to receive that striking enforcement by the parable in act of the fruitless fig-tree blasted by a word of his mouth.

Thus faithfully forewarned in vain, the sentenced Jewish nation would rush headlong and blindfold on its dreadful doom!

It will of course have been noticed that, in these later days of the Lord's earthly career, there seems to be a diminishing number of miracles to record. But his discourses were not wholly unaccompanied with the working of beneficent wonders. He was teaching in "one of the synagogues," and of course on the Sabbath Day. A woman was there whose body was so bowed together that she could not straighten herself. The Lord saw her and spoke to her: "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." He was not willing that it should be a word alone; it would be an added grace if he touched her. He touched her, and immediately she was made straight. She glorified God.

But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant! He rebuked the Lord, indirectly, over the heads of the multitude—with a special aim, no doubt at the woman. "There are six days in which men ought to work," he said; "in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath." The Lord, in his turn, was indignant. "Ye hypocrites," he said, "doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to the watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?" What eloquence there was in the use of those words, the words "bound" and "bond," to link together the case before him and the illustrative case supposed! (Those two words very happily reproduce in English, even heighten, the effect of the Greek words which they translate.)

XXVI

INCIDENTS OF JOURNEYING

IN the absence of times and places assigned for many of the incidents and many of the discourses recorded by the Evangelists, it is, as has before been said, impossible to be sure of the true order and succession in which they occurred. We cannot determine with certainty how often, during the concluding twelve months of his life, Jesus went to Jerusalem and then withdrew from it to greater or less remove, before he entered the city for the last time. What here immediately follows from Luke occurred we know on some journey of Jesus toward Jerusalem as a goal. It may have been in Galilee, or it may have been in Perea; as will presently be seen, it was somewhere within the bounds of the jurisdiction of Herod.

“Are there few that be saved?” asked one. This inquirer was evidently a man whose conscience was alarmed by the solemn warning words of Jesus. Jesus replied in a way to keep the conscience of the man wholesomely alarmed. But he made his reply general by using the plural number. Indeed, the Evangelist tells us that the reply was directed not to him, the inquirer, but “to them,” the Lord’s hearers in general. The purport of it was, ‘Strive to enter in by the narrow door.’ Salvation is not to be had without striving, and the way to it is narrow.

There is a tendency prevalent at the present time to treat the good promised by the gospel of Christ, as largely, if not chiefly, or even exclusively, a good to be realized here and now. Not so did Jesus himself teach.

It is, observe, a salvation not chiefly of this world, or of the present state, the salvation that he speaks of on this occasion; for he expressly names Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, as sharers of it. To see these patriarchs and "all the prophets" safe within the kingdom of God, and "yourselves cast forth without"—that, Jesus awfully forewarns his hearers, will be a doom to excite "the weeping and gnashing of teeth"—that is to say, a lamentation and a fruitless gesture of malignant despair, compared with which no other were worthy of mention. "And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last," is the cadence with which this teaching dies away on the awe-stricken ear of the hearer of whatever time.

At this moment, there come up certain Pharisees who perform an ambiguous office of friendship for Jesus. They tell him that he had better leave that part of the country, for Herod Antipas, the ruler, was bent on taking his life. There is some probability that Herod used these Pharisees as his tools in the task of ridding his territories of the unwelcome presence of Jesus. That presence was felt as a disturbing power. The Lord's miracle-working threatened, so the tyrant doubtless thought, to foment sedition, to make Jesus the hero of a popular revolutionary movement which might unsettle his throne. Jesus saw through the subtlety of Herod. "Go and say to that fox," he replied, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I finish my course."

This is perhaps to be understood quite literally, as meaning that Jesus would go on three days longer and no more, doing his wonders of blessing in Herod's dominion. He had no fear of perishing either before his time, or in any other place than the one appointed to him. It could not be, he said, that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. That city had had, it should continue to have, the melancholy distinction of being

by eminence the great slayer of prophets. Then follows the first of those famous laments from the Lord over guilty and doomed Jerusalem. It is paternal, like the lament of David for Absalom.

Those machinating enemies of Jesus laid their snares for him in places not to have been thought of. A ruling Pharisee asks him to dinner on a Sabbath Day. This is a second recorded occasion of the sort, and there were probably others, not recorded. The Pharisees were "watching" Jesus. There was present, perhaps by provision of the Pharisees as an occasion of test to the Lord, a man afflicted with dropsy. Jesus asks his enemies, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath or not?" They made no reply. He then, having healed the man and dismissed him, applied again that unanswerable argument, used before but appropriately modified now to suit the modified conditions, the argument of the ass or the ox found in need on the Sabbath Day.

On that same occasion, observing the unseemly competition rife among the persons bidden, to secure each for himself a place of honor at table, Jesus drew from his observation a "parable," which, with remarkable plainness of speech for a guest to fellow guests, he applied directly to the company about him. It is, however, to be remarked that Jesus, perhaps by way of softening his lesson a little, speaks, not of a dinner, not even of a banquet in general, but of a wedding-feast. If our Lord, at any time of which there is record in the Gospels, indulged himself in delivering instruction not religious, not even directly ethical, in character, the present might seem such a case. But Luke's calling the present instruction a "parable" (which on its face manifestly it was not), may be a purposed hint to us to put a spiritual interpretation on the Lord's words. It was at all events sound worldly wisdom that those self-asserting guests heard propounded that day by Jesus. The maxim

deduced, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," has its fruitful application in the realm of the spirit. But one who humbles himself in order to be exalted, does not really humble himself. The fact is that in the spiritual sphere the self-humbling is itself the exaltation.

The Pharisee, his host, was also remembered by the Lord in the way of instruction adapted to his case. Perhaps Jesus noticed that the bidden guests of the day were persons of worldly condition such as not to stand in need of the social entertainment they were enjoying; while there were outside spectators present, like the dropsical man for instance, to whom invitation to a bountiful feast would be boon indeed. 'Bid to thy feast,' he in substance said, 'such guests as have it not in their power to recompense thee with return of invitation. Thou wilt so be earning recompense to be bestowed in the resurrection of the just.' Upon hearing these things, a fellow guest of the Lord said sanctimoniously, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

This gentleman perhaps thought that he had thus very happily fallen into chord with the special peculiarity of Jesus as teacher; Jesus made much of the "kingdom of God" in what he had to say. Possibly the remark was even intended by its author to ease the tension of the situation at table. If so, he was probably surprised by the response that he evoked. It came in the form of a parable. The purport of the parable was to teach that guests bidden to the feast celebrated in the kingdom of God ran the risk of forfeiting in various ways their privilege of being present there; while many outcasts not thought of by them would come in to occupy their vacant room. It was a veiled hint, whether or not at the time understood to be such, of the rejection that the proud, unbelieving Jews were incurring, and of the predestined substitution for them of the despised and lowly—nay,

even of the Gentiles—as final inheritors of the blessings of the gospel. It went home to the case of the Pharisee watchers of Jesus there present; but we have no reason to suppose that it went home to their conscience or their heart.

Where it was that the incident of this Pharisee dinner to Jesus occurred, we do not know; but there is indication of its having occurred in the course of the Lord's journeying to Jerusalem. The multitudes that accompanied him were now great, and he addressed to them teaching adapted to diminish their number: "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." He was resolved that there should be no misunderstanding as to the terms on which, and on which alone, discipleship to him could be maintained. Jesus was the most exacting of masters. Indeed there cannot even be conceived a mastership more exacting than his. Hear him speaking now to these multitudes: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," was his final sifting word. Sifting it was; but not repelling. 'If you have now some susceptibility of heart to entertain and understand what I say, use it; it will grow by use; but it will perish by disuse'; such was the sense of his language.

Publicans and sinners seem to have felt encouraged by the tenor of the teaching of Christ. They thronged to him in such numbers that Luke says they "all" were coming. This, of course, shocked the scribes and Pharisees. Their sanctimonious horror called out in succession three parables from the Lord, one of which, the last one, that of the Prodigal Son, is probably entitled to be pronounced the most famous and the noblest of all Christ's parables, and therefore the most famous and the noblest parable in the world. The parable of the Lost

Sheep and the parable of the Lost Piece of Silver preceded this. The visitor to Palestine may to this day see the picture realized in act, of that shepherd bearing the recovered sheep on his shoulder. I remember to have read somewhere what, if it be true, throws an interesting illustrative light on the parable of the Lost Piece of Silver. According to that statement, if I remember rightly, the ten pieces of silver were in the nature of a wedding-gift, received by the wife from her husband. To lose one of them would be accounted special ill fortune, as foretoking some calamity about to befall. The recovery, therefore, of even a single one lost would, notwithstanding its trifling intrinsic value (less than twenty cents), constitute an occasion of rejoicing important enough to be celebrated in company with invited friends and neighbors.

Out of the enormous mass of rabbinical literature, or out of the equally enormous mass of the so-called sacred scriptures belonging to religions other than the biblical, the student may occasionally bring to light some story worth reproducing for the admiration or even the instruction of men. But it is the unique character of the Gospels that to every one of its recorded parables belong an individual interest and an individual value which put it permanently among the treasured literary possessions of the human race. That story of the wayward prodigal son, at last repentant, and then more than forgiven—how it has mastered human imaginations and human hearts in all times and in all climes! The beauty of it, the simplicity of it, the pathos of it, the power of it, the hold it has on the primal and universal instincts of human nature!

Let some great literary artist try his hand now in producing a parable the peer of it. That artist would, after experiment, be of all men the loudest in praise of the inimitable, incomparable, unapproachable, easy

supremacy of the parable of the Prodigal Son. And it seems to have been struck out at one stroke, in its unimprovable lines of perfection, with the mere voice of the Teacher, and so committed, unwritten, to the keeping of the impalpable and fickle air—thence to be gathered and fixed for us in form of written words by a man of whom we know almost nothing, except that he wrote this, and a few other records such as this. Was there not a power here at work, not only in the speaking, but in the recording, other and higher than simply human? And consider the inexhaustible fecundity of producing power implied. For parable followed parable, as if from a fountain that could never run dry. And the fragments of such discourse that survive are to be regarded as only meager specimens of the volume of this mellifluous teaching that flowed day after day from that mouth like the river of God which is full of water.

The parable of the Unjust Steward followed. This shows how the shrewdness may be separated in thought from the fraud of dishonest worldly dealing and made to teach a useful lesson. We are all of us so to use worldly wealth, in whatever measure it may be ours, as to earn ourselves at last a welcome to "the eternal tabernacles." Worldly wealth receives from Jesus the name, "mammon of unrighteousness," probably as being conceived to have acquired always more or less taint of evil in passing to our hands through the "corrupted currents of this world." "Ye cannot serve God *and* Mammon," said the Lord. Luke tells us that the money-loving Pharisees scoffed at him, when they heard these things. Jesus responded by point-blank reproof. 'You,' he in effect said, 'make a fair show before men; but God is not deceived.' He added these words: "That which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Praise from men is, according to Christ, an illegitimate object of human pursuit. And perhaps the

pursuit of wealth is, with the most of those engaged in it, largely a form of seeking praise from men. "Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself," the Psalmist said, long before Jesus, and the saying holds yet; it will hold until human nature suffers a radical change.

The consideration thus suggested may be the link in thought that connects with what had just been given the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, next following. This parable also, like many other of the teachings of Christ uttered during his last journey to Jerusalem, dealt with that subject of which his heart was now so full, namely, the doom of woe that, by their rejection of him, his hostile countrymen were invoking upon themselves. The Rich Man (or Dives, as he is often called, the Latin word for "rich man"), was a type, primarily, of the unbelieving Jewish nation.

Doubtless there were instances, not recorded, of mutual difference and quarrel arising from time to time among the disciples, as they journeyed in company; the chances of joint travel are proverbial for producing such results. It was very likely on the occurrence of one of these that the Lord said, "It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come," and taught the remedy: "Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother sin, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." We are not to brood in silence over a wrong done us; we are not to talk about it resentfully with others; we are to "rebuke"—of course tenderly—the wrong-doer, and give him a chance to express regret. It is noticeable that Jesus changes from plural to singular in giving these directions: "Take heed to *yourselves*; if *thy* brother sin." He would make the particular practical duty enjoined fit as close as possible to the individual conscience and heart.

The apostles were dumbfounded. 'Forgive like that!' thought they, with wonder, as if feeling an impossibility in it. "Increase our faith!" they exclaimed aloud. The Lord will astonish them, will stumble them, yet more. 'Why, if you had any faith at all,' he in substance says, 'if the principle of faith within you were even as a grain of mustard-seed for size, so far from your finding it hard to forgive thus, you would be able to bid this sycamore-tree here, Be thou torn up by the roots, and be thou planted in the sea, with the certainty of its obeying you. Do not imagine that you will be earning special thanks by doing what I have now commanded. Regard yourselves still as unprofitable servants, even after having rendered the fullest obedience.' Jesus thus describes the attitude of mind to be maintained by all the disciples toward themselves. He does not describe thus the attitude of mind which he himself will maintain toward them. He will be gracious, we may be sure; but we should be severe—not one toward another, but each toward himself.

At about this point of time in the journeying and teaching of Jesus an event occurred near Jerusalem which, with its momentous sequel, is of such commanding importance that it must receive treatment by itself in a separate chapter.

That event was the death of Lazarus.

XXVII

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

LET us go into Judea again," said Jesus to his disciples. The occasion was one of sad interest—sad to the Saviour himself for his own sake, and the more sad to him as likewise so sad to friends whom he loved. That hospitable home in Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha, had been invaded by sickness; sickness so serious that word was sent to Jesus informing him of it. The sisters sent the word, and they couched it in terms of exquisite simplicity and pathos. It was a peculiarly eloquent appeal; for the sisters' love for the sick seemed to lose itself in love for the Lord. It was as if it were for his sake, and not for their own, that they mourned and were anxious. The message ran, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." That meant their brother Lazarus.

Jesus replying said—to his disciples we may presume, though it may have been to the messenger for his report in return to the sisters: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." We should miss much if we failed to observe how this form of expression associates Jesus in equality, almost in identity, with God. The glory of God would at once promote, and be promoted by, the glory of his Son. Jesus made no immediate motion to act upon the news he had received. He stayed two days longer where he was, that is, in Perea, before proposing to his disciples, with use of the words quoted at the beginning of this chapter, a return to Judea. 'To Judea!' thought the disciples, with wonder and with recoil from the thought. They said, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now

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seeking to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" It was a question of deterrent loyal concern.

No wonder the disciples expostulated with their Master against the suggested fresh exposure of his life. But Jesus serenely replied, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" His own appointed "day" had in it its unalterable measure of twelve hours—which could not be made less. He afterward explained the object of his intended return to Judea. "Our friend Lazarus," he said—with ineffable divine condescension, he, in that word "our," equaled himself with his disciples, as to their common bond with him of friendship to the sick man of Bethany—"Our friend Lazarus," he said, "is fallen asleep; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." In his expression of purpose to "awake" the sleeper, he separates himself from the disciples, and says "I." The disciples did not understand their Master's gentle euphemism. Sleep was a good sign, they thought. He will get well, they innocently said, if he have fallen asleep. They really meant perhaps, 'Thou wilt not need to go to him.'

Jesus now plainly told them, "Lazarus is dead." It was undoubtedly his supernatural knowledge that enabled him to impart this information. He also told them he was glad for their sake that he had been absent from Bethany; the result for them would be a needed deepening of their faith—faith a little later to be so desperately tried. This seems to imply that, had he been present in Bethany, Lazarus should not have died. But it would, to the disciples, be far more striking and impressive, if Lazarus should be raised from the dead, than it could have been, had he only been prevented (of course, this must have been beyond anybody's actual observation) from dying. "Nevertheless, let us go unto him," the Lord added. Thomas then said something that ought to be well considered by those who would form a just idea of this disciple's character. "Doubting Thomas," he is

often called; but loyal Thomas he likewise assuredly was. To his fellow disciples, he said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him [that is, with Jesus]." Thomas was sure that Jesus' going to Judea would result in the death of his Master; and that death, in the fulness of his love, he was minded to share.

When Jesus reached Bethany, the end, the seeming end, to Lazarus had already come; Lazarus was dead, as, several days previously, the disciples were in so many words plainly told by their Master. Four days before, Lazarus had been laid in his sepulcher. "Now Bethany was nigh Jerusalem," so John says, and note that he says it in the past tense; Bethany had probably already ceased to be, when John wrote his Gospel—the predicted dreadful destruction of Jerusalem, with of course its suburbs, having intervened. The sisters' friends from the neighboring city were present in considerable numbers, on a visit of consolation to the house. Martha got early word of Jesus' approach, and she went out to meet him; while Mary still kept her place and her posture, sitting, at home.

Martha's first burst of speech was exquisitely natural and touching; one still feels the effect of the tears in her words: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." So much for love and lament; with faith enough mingling to make the anguish complete. Then this: "And even now, I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee." Faith there is a note so strong that the anguish has almost died out of the language. Jesus met her with, "Thy brother shall rise again." Did he mean, 'I will raise him to life'? Martha would not be overhasty to take the Lord in this sense. She said, touchingly, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." There was question, there was appeal, we cannot doubt, in the pathetic inflection of voice with which these saddened believing words were said.

Jesus said to her: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." Astounding paradoxes to be so calmly propounded! Jesus adds a question that puts Martha to the necessity of immediate reply: "Believest thou this?" If she hesitates, though but an instant, she will already have replied, and her reply will have been, No. She says, "Yea, Lord; I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." This ended the exchanges between Jesus and Martha.

Martha, sent by the Master, summoned Mary to him. Mary's friends followed Mary, supposing that she was going to her brother's grave, there to weep. Mary reaching Jesus fell down at his feet, with Martha's own first words, repeated, on her lips. Her weeping, and the weeping of her companions, shook the calm of Jesus' spirit; he was "troubled." "Where have ye laid him?" he asked. "Lord, come and see," they said. Jesus felt himself overpowered. He wept.

"Behold, how he loved him!" said the Jews. Some of them even said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have kept Lazarus from dying?" That Jerusalem miracle of restoring sight to one blind from his birth, had, it seems, made a profound and lasting impression. Jesus, inwardly wrought upon with a feeling of resentment that such things, the result of sin, should be in the world, came to the tomb.

John's language at this point is vague, not to say enigmatical, leaving the sense open to conjecture. My own conjecture, as has been intimated, is that our Lord's unusual emotion had a large, impersonal, quasi-cosmic direction, that he was divinely resentful that such misery, the result of sin, had been introduced into his world. If there was a personal aim, it may be supposed to have been against the Prince of this world, whose work such misery was, and whose works he had come to destroy.

(There is much, however, to be said in favor of the view that the peculiar emotion of mingled grief and displeasure manifested by Jesus on this occasion was a sentiment of indignation indulged by him against "the Jews"—"some of them"—in attendance there, assumed to be insincere, hypocritical sympathizers with the bereaved sisters, and to be really enemies of Jesus, present with hostile intention against him.)

The tomb was an excavation, probably in rock, and with a rock it was covered. "Take ye away the stone," said Jesus. Martha's sentiment of reverence for the dead prevailed for a moment over her faith. She would not have the corruption of her beloved exposed to the senses of observers. She expostulated. 'Consider,' she in effect said; 'he has been four days buried. Corruption has already begun its work.' Jesus rallied her faith with, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

There were willing hands to take the covering of stone away. Then "Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me." Does this import that Jesus had prayed already on this behalf, and had received assurance of answer? What he adds favors the idea: "And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude standing around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me." What confident communion of Son and Father, held consciously in the hearing of the multitude—for their sake! Will God sanction this appeal? If he do, what can prevent every one's believing? But will every one believe?

Having so prayed, or, as John expresses it, "spoken," Jesus cried "with a loud voice," as if in token of the resurrection energy exerted, "Lazarus, come forth!" Nobody could describe, nobody can conceive, the impression upon bystanders, when they saw issue from the tomb the living figure of the buried man, the grave-bands still on him making fast both hands and feet, and his face

bound about with its napkin of ghastly white. "Loose him," said Jesus, "and let him go."

Jesus had loosed the mighty bonds of death; others might undo for the man, dead no more, the fastenings with which those mighty bonds had been unconsciously symbolized.

XXVIII

ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT

NOT every one did believe. Some out of the number of those who witnessed this stupendous miracle went away from the scene of it, and, either in an idly tattling, or else in a maliciously meddling, spirit, told the Pharisees what Jesus had done. The result was that the embers of Pharisaic hatred for him were blown into fresh flame. It is to be taken account of that Lazarus too was involved in the murderous hatred that now burned afresh in the bosoms of the chief priests against Jesus. John says: "They took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus."

This incidental note of John's is important, as suggesting a probable reason why it was that the other Evangelists did not record at all so signal a wonder from the hands of the Lord as the raising of Lazarus. It is not unlikely that Lazarus was still living when they wrote, and they would not do anything that might tend to focus upon him anew the attention of the hostile Jews, and so endanger his life. John's Gospel was of later date, and Lazarus, it may be supposed, had by the time it was written escaped through death all danger of harm from human hands.

From before that threatening outburst of enmity Jesus retired once more, this time into a place called Ephraim, "near to the wilderness"—a "city" which it is not possible now exactly to locate. Here he stayed with his disciples, no one can say exactly how long. Perhaps, when at length the last Passover drew nigh, Jesus may

have set out from Ephraim and accomplished one more general circuit of the regions previously traversed by him. If that expression in Luke before spoken of, "through the midst of Samaria and Galilee," is rightly thus rendered, and is not to be taken to mean, "on the border line between Samaria and Galilee," as would be equally true to the Greek, then it becomes entirely admissible to suppose that it relates to such a last general tour as the one here suggested. The question involved is one much debated by scholars. Unanimous agreement is not to be hoped for.

To us who here study the earthly life of the Lord, it is sufficient to rest reasonably certain, as we are warranted in doing, that what follows in this chapter occurred, at any rate, during some stage of the last progress of the Lord toward Jerusalem. The incident of the healing of the ten lepers we know thus occurred; for Luke expressly says so. In the same connection, he also says that it was while "he was passing through the midst of [or else, between] Samaria and Galilee."

Those wretched victims of the most desperate of slow, malignant diseases "stood afar off," as required by law or by custom, but they lifted up their voices in suit of mercy from Jesus. He bade them go and show themselves to the priests, as the law was in case of a supposed cure of leprosy. They had the faith to go, and they were cleansed as they went. One of them when cleansed turned back, and shouted aloud his gladness, glorifying God. He fell forward on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Jesus exclaimed: "Were not the ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this alien?" For the one thanksgiver out of the ten was a Samaritan.

The Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God was coming. We are at hopeless loss to know exactly the

whole meaning of what the Lord replied; for a certain important word that he used bears equally well either one of two meanings: "the kingdom of God is *among* you"; or, "the kingdom of God is *within* you." When we consider to whom Jesus was speaking, it seems more likely that he meant "*among* you," that is, already present—had they but eyes to discern it! To the disciples then Jesus gave solemn instructions applicable to the time approaching when he should no longer be personally present with them, and while the crisis of her doom foretold should yet be, in an awful, a bodeful, suspense, overhanging Jerusalem.

They were necessarily somewhat veiled words that he spoke. The suddenness, the inevitableness, the completeness, of the national ruin that would descend, are impressively described. It would be as in the days of Noah, when the flood came; it would be as in the days of Lot, when fire and brimstone rained down from heaven. "In the day when the Son of Man is revealed," "he which is on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away." "There shall be two women grinding together; one shall be taken, and the other left." "Where, Lord?" asked the bewildered disciples. *That* they would learn soon enough themselves from the events forerunning the predestined fulfilment. It was sufficient for the present, if he excited their vigilant fears. He answered them somewhat mysteriously, perhaps in terms of a proverb. "Where the body is, there will also the eagles be gathered together." Some have imagined that here was a designed allusion to the Roman army of destruction—the Roman military standard having an "eagle" as its device. A brief and telling parable was dropped by the way, addressed to certain persons complacently self-righteous, and disdainful toward their fellows. Everybody knows it by heart; it is the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

Those untiring Pharisees! They tempt Jesus again. This time it is a question about divorce. Jesus' reply has been of the highest historic importance. It has perhaps had more influence in purifying domestic life, in cementing human society, in promoting civilization, than all the ethical precepts of all the human philosophers that have taught since the world began. It declares the sacredness and the inviolability of the marriage bond. It has upon the whole had universal and uninterrupted sway in the custom and the legislation of Christendom. The sanction of it is expressed in that grave sentence, "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

A significant conjunction of teachings. In immediate sequel to the teaching on the subject of marriage, little children were brought to Jesus for the holy touch of his hands upon them. The Lord had just sanctified marriage; it was fit that he should next put the seal of his touch on the fruit of marriage. The "little children" were babes, as we know from Luke. What he was asked to do for these little ones, and what he did, was to "touch" them and to "pray." These two things and no more. He used no oil to anoint them; he used no water to baptize them. What he then did for those particular babes, we feel sure he did in symbol and in effect for all babes, not less than for them.

The disciples had been too self-important in the matter of this fond application to Jesus. They were for sending the bringers of the babes, parents no doubt, away. But Jesus was displeased. He uttered those immortal words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God"—words which have blessed the lot of children in all Christian generations since, and words, for sweet and potent benignity, not paralleled by utterance from any other in all the world that ever spoke with human lips since time began.

“These two things and no more,” we said. But those two only things Jesus did with a certain fulness that overflowed and seemed to make them more. He took the babes in his arms to lay his hands upon them; and as he “prayed,” he “blessed” them. Beautiful act benign! It has been a prolonged benediction ever since. The fragrance of it is not less—more, rather—that it was given forth so long ago, and that it has since been so widely diffused.

There is no end to the variety of lovely pictures that compose the more tranquil side of this idyllic earthly life of Jesus. What has just been related seems to have taken place indoors, or at any rate at some little remove from the highway. Mark says, “As he was going forth into the way,” that is, from the scene of the blessing pronounced on little children, there came to him, not walking, even with quickened gait, but actually running, a young man—he was a young man of condition, a “ruler”—who kneeled in the dust at Jesus’ feet and asked an eager question. “Good Master,” said he, “what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Noble inquiry! It was most reverently made. Did the young man know how reverently? He had said, “Good Master.” Was he aware what his adjective implied? Jesus will sound him and see.

He asked, “How callest thou me good?”—how? that is, why? on what ground? in what sense? “None is good,” the Lord went on to say, “save one, that is, God.” It was as if Jesus would ask: ‘Dost thou indeed perceive the God in me? Is that why thou callest me good?’ Without waiting for any reply from the young ruler, Jesus said, “If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments.” He at the same time recalled a number of these. “Master, all these things have I observed from my youth,” the young man, no doubt with all modesty, with self-knowledge however defective, said in reply, adding, “What lack I yet?”

Jesus looked upon this youthful seeker after truth with a peculiar regard, and instinctively loved him. "One thing thou lackest," he tenderly said; "go sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." At this, alas, the young man's countenance fell, and he went sadly away. It was his misfortune to be very rich. Jesus perhaps followed the young man with his eyes as he went away; but if he did, he soon withdrew his look, and turned it round about himself, at the same time sighing aloud, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

To the disciples expressing their amazement at this utterance, Jesus would abate nothing from what he had said. Indeed, he said it again still more strongly, but added, "Things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Peter spoke up and said, "Lo, we have left all and have followed thee." Jesus made his reply to Peter general in form, so as to include all places and all ages, promising to such as answered Peter's description, a hundredfold at present, "with persecutions," and "eternal life" at last, that is, "in the world to come." Then came the parable of the Vineyard, with its lesson at once for the Jews as a nation, jealous of the Gentiles who were soon to be equaled with themselves in blessing; and for all the individuals of the human race, summoned, whether early or late, to share the salvation and the responsibilities of the gospel. Like a solemn refrain comes in once more at the end that notice to all, "The last shall be first, and the first last."

Jesus was burdened with his prophetic sense of things to be. He yearned to impart his secret to his disciples. So he now takes his twelve apostles away from the general throng, and, walking forward still, tells them yet again of his own impending doom. He particularizes more than ever before. He is to be mocked, to be

scourged, to be spit upon, to be crucified. But as ever, so now, he repeats his promise and prophecy of the resurrection to follow; he is to be raised from the dead the third day.

There was something at this time unusually impressive—impressive to the point of awfulness—in the mien and manner of Jesus. Mark notes it strikingly. The Lord seems to have quickened his pace. He went *before* his apostles, no longer with them. They were “amazed”; they were even “afraid,” following him. It was the Spirit in him that urged him on like a motive power stronger than he. He was under the mighty hand of God. But to that hand he responded with the impulse of a solemnly joyful obedience. He saluted his future and hastened to its dreadful embrace. But there was the irrepressible buoyancy of hope and of joy in his feeling. We know that it was with support of the “joy set before him,” that he endured the cross when it came; we need not doubt that he also anticipated the cross with something of the same victorious exultation.

Luke tells us that of all that Jesus had thus foretold, the apostles had understood—nothing. This statement he twice repeats strongly. It was reserved for two of the most favored of the twelve, to furnish prompt melancholy proof that this indeed was so. That proof may be reserved for the next succeeding chapter.

XXIX

THE APPROACH TO THE CITY

ALAS for human frailty! And alas for human ambition, which the frailty accompanying is not often sufficiently conscious of itself to abash! Just at the moment when these themes of thought and prophecy, destruction for Jerusalem, obedience even to death for himself, were usurping the heart and employing the tongue of the Saviour, who should come to him but a woman in suit of worldly advantage at his hands! It was a mother, and she brought a petition for preferment on behalf of her sons. Those sons were the brothers James and John. Salome, their mother, begged that the two chief places in the Lord's kingdom might be given to them. Jesus seems to have seen plainly enough that the sons had prompted the mother. His answer was to them, and not to her: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" "We are able," they fatuously replied. There was no hope as yet of making them understand. Jesus, with a gentleness that was severe, repelled them.

And now the ten fellow apostles promptly avail themselves of their chance to show that they also are as selfish as James and John. For they are moved with indignation against the two applicants; an indignation natural indeed on their part, but fatally self-revealing. Jesus in effect rebukes the twelve apostles all alike; the two had only been a little more forward with the same spirit that really animated all the ten equally. "Whosoever would be first among you," said the Lord, "shall be bond-servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give

his life a ransom for many." In those words, "his life a ransom," is inextricably contained a statement, sufficient for practical use, of that great teaching of Christ and his apostles, which theologians call the doctrine of vicarious atonement—a doctrine this, sometimes falsely said to be not Christ's doctrine, but Paul's.

Multitudes, multitudes! The impression of them will not forsake the memory and the imagination of the historians of Jesus. The Lord had reached Jericho on his way to Jerusalem. The tumult of such a following—a following multiplied now by the concourse of Galilean pilgrims thronging to the feast—excited first the curiosity, and then the hope, of two blind men sitting by the wayside. When these unfortunates learned that this was no other than the far-famed Jesus of Nazareth, they set up a loud importunate cry for mercy from him. The multitude said, 'Hush!' but the blind men only shouted the louder. Jesus stayed his steps. "Call them," said he. The multitude changed their style. 'Be encouraged,' they said; "he is calling you." The usual event—they were healed. Perhaps the same thing was repeated on the same occasion. Matthew says "two blind men," not described as "beggars"; Mark and Luke agree in mentioning only one case, and that, with each Evangelist, was the case of a "beggar." But it may not have been for both Evangelists the same beggar. For Mark names his man; it was Bartimæus; and he gives the healing as performed on the Lord's way out from Jericho; while Luke gives his as performed on the way in. Matthew's story of the two men healed belongs to the occasion of the Lord's leaving Jericho.

Nothing would be more natural than that there should be blind men sitting by the way on both sides of the city; and nothing more natural than that the second man should repeat, in the same terms, the same application that, as he probably would have heard, had so wonderfully succeeded with the first. Of Matthew's two cases,

Mark mentions only one, the one which he could identify by name. As for the behavior of the multitude, that, too, would quite naturally reproduce itself on successive occasions. What would be instinctive with a crowd once, would be equally instinctive with a crowd a second time; and it is not at all necessary to conceive—indeed it would be highly improbable—that the whole mass of the people knew exactly everything said at a given particular point among them; one group “rebuked” the clamoring beggar of to-day, a different group, the clamoring beggar of the morrow, neither group having the least knowledge of the other. This explanation is suggested only; it is not insisted upon. In any case, there is substantial agreement among the various historians, and this is quite sufficient to engage the candid reader’s confidence.

A novel and picturesque incident now occurs, one full of the ever-incalculable, yet always sublimely self-consistent, character of the Lord. A certain rich man in Jericho, whose business was that of chief collector of revenue, was exceedingly anxious to get sight of Jesus. He being short in stature, his chance was small in the crowd, unless he could command some overlooking position. For this purpose he was willing to sacrifice his dignity, and, running on before, he clambered into a sycamore-tree on the way by which Jesus would pass. A great surprise awaited this man. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up into the tree and called the occupant by his name. “Zacchæus,” said he, “make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.”

Jesus had not mistaken his man. Zacchæus hastened down and with great joy welcomed the Lord to his house. There was a general murmur of disapprobation at this. “He is gone in to lodge with a sinner,” they said. But Zacchæus was a repentant sinner. Before that divine Guest went away, he stood up in the presence of Jesus and declared his purpose to devote half his

wealth to the poor and to restore fourfold what he might have wrongfully exacted of any man. Jesus said: "To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." The Lord, then, seemed satisfied with the half from Zacchæus; though he had required the whole from that amiable young ruler. This discrimination suggests that in the young ruler's case the demand was suited to the perceived character and need of the particular person, constituting rather a test for him than a thing to be carried out in actual practice by all.

Those words to Zacchæus were perhaps spoken by Jesus as a kind of farewell before he started away. He added a parable, suggested by the vicinity of Jerusalem and by the current general expectation that the kingdom of God, of course misconceived of, was on the immediate verge of openly appearing. The parable was that of the Ten Pounds. The underlying thought of it was that haunting one, of the growingly imminent end of the Lord's earthly life and of the narrowing margin of probation left for the Jewish people. Jesus was about to withdraw from the earthly province of the universal dominion of God and go to the capital seat and court of the King in heaven, there to receive from his Father a rulership, and then to return.

The figure was to Christ's hearers familiar and striking. It was drawn from what again and again happened under the observation of men of that time, in the administration of the Roman empire. The lesson was that the result would be fatal to the obstinately rebellious. This teaching was doubly significant; having its application first to the judged and endangered Jewish nation, and then to every individual soul, of whatever time, of whatever clime, in that individual soul's relation, consciously obedient or consciously disobedient, to Christ, the vicegerent of God.

This parable spoken, the solemn progress was resumed in the direction of Jerusalem—the Lord himself going on in advance of all; as if, in his own prescient mind, the separation and consecration of himself to his approaching sacrificial death, unaccompanied and lonely, were already begun.

XXX

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

FROM Jericho to Bethany in the suburbs of Jerusalem was a distance of some nineteen miles; a difficult and dreary day's walk, the road rough, the country desolate. Jesus arrived at Bethany, as seems most probable, on the evening of a Friday. It was the Friday immediately preceding the Friday of his passion. Only a week, therefore, now intervenes before the tragic end of this heavenly earthly life. "End," do we say? Should we not say rather the tragic interruption only, for was not the life soon resumed for a little while at least on earth, before it was finally taken up out of human sight into the heaven of heavens?

There was much inquiry for Jesus, with much rumor and speculation about him, rife in the capital city, while he yet tarried for a day or two in the neighboring village of Bethany. He was guest doubtless at the home of the sisters Martha and Mary. "They"—but this word does not necessarily, does not probably, mean the sisters—"they," perhaps the Bethany community in partnership, make him a supper. It is in the house of one Simon; "the leper," he is called, as being well known in that character; become well known, we may presume, from having been healed by the Lord. Lazarus was present as guest. Martha was among those that served.

As for Mary, she performed a part not required which has had the effect of making that occasion more famous than perhaps any other social occasion in the world. She brought with her to the supper, in an alabaster cruse, a very costly ointment of nard; a pound's weight, John says. This she poured, in lavish effusion, over

the Lord's head, as he sat at meat. She also anointed his feet, wiping them with her hair. The house was filled with the odor of the ointment. It was a beautiful act of love and devotion. But there were some (and, alas, among these were the disciples—perhaps not all the disciples, though Matthew says loosely, "the disciples"; "one of the disciples," says John, naming him, Judas Iscariot) that murmured at such a waste of that unguent. They thought, Judas outright said, that it might have been sold for the benefit of the poor; it would have brought three hundred pence! (This sum represents upwards of a hundred dollars, present value.)

Mary was disconcerted. Had she made a mistake? But Jesus came to her relief. "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me." He put a pathetic interpretation upon her act: "She hath anointed my body aforehand for the burying." How full that prophetic human heart divine was of the coming end! Then he added a prediction which is every day yet, as it has been every day since it was uttered, and this over ever-increasing areas of the great globe, receiving its never-completed fulfilment: "Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." When ever was other loving woman's simple act so profusely rewarded with inexhaustible revenues of affectionate fame?

The common people got word of Jesus' being at Bethany, and they began to resort thither. They were eager to see Jesus; but Lazarus, too—they wanted to see him. This involved Lazarus also in danger from the envy and hatred of the Jews. They coupled him with Jesus in their plots of murder.

On the Sunday following, that is, the next day probably after the supper at Simon's, Jesus enters Jerusalem. But the entry is not made by him on foot, as

the preceding journeys thither had all of them been made. The Messiah will enter his capital city as King. He provides himself an ass, a young one which man never before bestrode, and takes his seat upon it. The moment was one of the wildest popular excitement. The people thought they saw the commencing in triumph of the Messianic kingdom. The multitudes of pilgrims to the city from all quarters of the land swelled the following of Jesus to uncounted numbers, and the contagion of excitement was like a spreading conflagration. Nothing that could be thought of was left undone by the throngs to testify their delirious joy. They stripped off their outer garments and strewed them in the way before Jesus. They flew to the wayside trees, and to trees in the fields adjoining, and cutting off branches flung these down on the road for their King to pass over. The earth was not fit for even the young ass that bore him to plant its feet upon. Meantime, shoutings before him, shoutings behind him, shoutings around him, with waving of palm branches in innumerable hands. "Hosanna!" was multitudinously cried, "Hosanna in the highest!" "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" "Blessed the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David!"

But there were some spectators that kept themselves perfectly collected and cool amid the general ecstasy. Those omnipresent Pharisees were there, by deputation perhaps; and they gave Jesus a chance to clear himself, if he would, from any complicity in these reprehensible extravagances of the people. "Master," they thoughtfully said, "rebuke thy disciples." But Jesus sternly and eloquently replied, "I tell you that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." A crisis like that which was passing demanded a voice. The insensate stones should provide it, if there were no human beings to speak.

The sight of Jerusalem, beheld from Olivet, affected her King to tears. Then again was uttered by him, though not yet for the last time, a lamentation of his, with prophecy, over the doomed city; lamentation laden with a weight of pathos such as certainly never was human speech laden with before. The commentary of subsequent history was soon fearfully to emphasize—if possible augment—the somber solemnity of the Saviour's boding words.

When he finally entered the city, his entrance sent an agitation to the very heart of Jerusalem. "Who is this?" was the question asked by the multitudes already there. "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee," the multitudes accompanying replied. The day was far spent. Jesus proceeded to the temple, went in, and took a survey of the things that were there. His action in doing this must have been peculiarly impressive to invite the record that was made of it by the historian. He then, it being now eventide, returned for the night to Bethany with the twelve.

XXXI

THE LAST MONDAY

THE hastening days of the last week (often called "Holy Week") of the Saviour's earthly life were very unequally marked with incident recorded. Two incidents only are given for Monday. Monday morning, as afterward daily (unless Wednesday was an exception) till the end, he went from Bethany, where he spent his nights, to Jerusalem. His resort there was always to the temple. On his way thither Monday morning, he hungered. He may have spent his night in watching and prayer, and so have left Bethany fasting. Or he may have breakfasted early without appetite, and then delayed his start so long as naturally to feel hungry with exercise and the lapse of time. He saw at a distance a wayside fig-tree that seemed, from its appearance, to promise him some refreshment of food; but coming to it he found thereon nothing but leaves. It was, to be sure, not yet the season of figs; but this particular tree, for some reason of situation perhaps, was precociously forward, and there should have been young fruit, advanced enough to be edible, hidden in the foliage; the law of fruit-bearing for the fig-tree being fruit before leaves. There would hardly be fruit of last year's crop still hanging on the boughs. No, fruit there was none. The tree was barren. It never should be other than so. Its chance of reformation was gone. For the Lord would make it an impressive object-lesson to all future generations. It should stand forever in a kind of acted parable of the Jewish nation's character and destiny. "No man eat fruit from thee henceforward forever," Jesus judicially said.

The disciples heard these remarkable words, and they had speedy occasion to note the result. "How did the fig-tree immediately wither away?" they said, wondering. Jesus answering said to them: "Verily I say to you, if ye have faith, and do not doubt, not only shall ye do what is done to the fig-tree, but even if ye say to this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." As if to guard against an uplifting of spiritual pride inspired by the idea of omnipotence in prayer through faith, the Lord immediately adjoins this: "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." But, in thus joining here the sequel of result befalling the fig-tree with the instruction called out from Christ by the wondering remark of the disciples, we have been anticipating a little. This partly belongs to the story of Tuesday.

Before returning to the story of Monday, shall we entertain two questions that inevitably suggest themselves? First, Was the cursing of the fig-tree a yielding, on the Lord's part, to the petulance of personal disappointment? Second, was it an infringement of property rights? One and the same answer disposes of both questions. The Lord *could* wither (for he did wither) that tree with a word. Whoever could, thereby proved that if he *would*, he properly *might*. Besides, it was a wayside tree; probably, therefore, not individual property. Moreover, being barren, it was worthless, except for shade. It was in fact by being cursed converted to a public use far more beneficent and diffusive than any it could possibly have served, had it continued for its time to thrive—even in fruit-bearing; much more, in sterility.

From the cursing of the fig-tree, Jesus seems to have gone on directly to the temple, where the Jewish

nation, the antitype of that showy and worthless tree, maintained its imposing make-believe of flourishing in luxuriant leafy, but fruitless, pride. He here repeated his symbolic act, that act first performed by him near the beginning of his public career, of purging out from the purlieu of the sanctuary of God the profane abominations of worldly barter and exchange that had been suffered again to gather there. The blind and the lame flocked in thither to him, and he healed them. It was a novel scene. The children meanwhile were crying aloud in the temple their infant hosannas to the Saviour's name.

The sense of propriety in those chief priests and scribes was again rudely disturbed. They appealed to Jesus with a question which was at the same time an intended reproach to him, and an unintended recognition of his power, "Hearest thou what these are saying?" "Yea," Jesus replied; adding, with a touch of lofty and indignant sarcasm, "Did ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" He was far from abdicating his own just claim to that ascription of praise to himself with which those half-unconscious children were rending the air.

But he left his opposers, in their fenced and impregnable blindness and pride; he left the choiring children; passing out of the temple, he went forth from the city for a night of comparative quiet in Bethany.

XXXII

THE LAST TUESDAY

THIS is a crowded day—none more so in the whole history of the teaching activity of Jesus. What is recorded of the incidents by the way, between Bethany and Jerusalem, has already by anticipation been given. Arrived in the temple, Jesus found a ferment of hostile welcome awaiting him. This had been prepared by the occurrences of the day preceding. The Jews came to him—it seems like a set and formal proceeding on their part, an action of the whole Sanhedrin perhaps—and demanded to know by what authority he was acting as he was, and who gave him his authority. Jesus replied with one of his own unanswerable questions. “First answer me, and then I will answer you,” was his proposal. “The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men?”

It was a dilemma with two fatal horns, the one of which these Jews could not escape without getting themselves securely impaled on the other. If they said, “From heaven,” then it followed inevitably that they should have believed John’s testimony concerning this strange person, Jesus. That testimony they had themselves formally sent to procure; and it had been rendered in terms express and unmistakable. It had affirmed the divine mission of Jesus. If, on the contrary, they said, “From men,” they would affront the people, and forfeit popular support; nay, even invoke the people’s anger, to the point of being themselves stoned by them. For John was universally regarded as a prophet. “We do not know,” they were forced ignominiously to say. “Neither tell I you,” said Jesus, “by what authority I do these things.”

Then in his turn Jesus, having his enemies at tremendous disadvantage, pressed them with parable upon parable intended to show how they, as representing the Jewish nation, had proved themselves, and were now proving themselves, unworthy depositaries of the sacred trust reposed with them by God. Nothing could exceed the terrible strength of language with which he upbraided and denounced them to their face and in the hearing of the people. His parable of the Two Sons, the one of whom said, "I will not," but afterward went, and the other of whom said, "I go, sir," and went not, he followed with this sentence upon his perverse and wicked hearers: "Verily, I say unto you, the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." His parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, he followed with this: "Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Those enraged but helpless hearers of these things were, of course, well aware that they were themselves the aim of the Lord's discourse. They were exasperated to the point of wishing to lay immediate violent hands upon him; but, "The people!"—*they* believed on Jesus as prophet, and the people had a formidable way of taking sudden vengeance, when the whim seized them; they were dangerously ready and reckless with missile stones.

Another of those deadly parables; this, after an interval during which apparently the enemies of the Lord had withdrawn in discomfiture—to return again, after mutual counsel, for renewal of their attack. The parable now uttered of the Marriage of the King's Son, resembles the parable of the Great Supper uttered on a previous occasion. It needed no explanatory application to be well enough understood. It pointed clearly to the exclusion and rejection by God of the unbelieving Jews. "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness," the sentence pronounced by the King in the

parable upon his offending invited guest, was a transparently veiled warning to every unbelieving and disobedient Jew.

If now this master of entrapping dialogue could be himself entrapped! 'Discredit him, as once fairly vanquished, in the presence of the people, and the popular favor would be transferred to our side.' So thought the enemies of the Lord. First, the Pharisees, with the Herodians, tried their hand. (Exactly who the "Herodians" were, is not agreed. Perhaps members of a political party supporting the pretensions of Herod as legitimate Jewish ruler. The important thing is, that they were united now with the Pharisees against Jesus.) Through a plausible spokesman of their number, they propound a question to Jesus. It is cast in somewhat the same form of dilemma as was that from Jesus which had a little while before so disastrously confounded them. The hostile approach is made with much simulated respect for Jesus' wisdom and authority. At the same time, the question is introduced with a preface intended to incite him to imprudent self-compromising plainness of speech. "Master," they say, "we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"

The question was subtly contrived, and on the whole adroitly presented; although the simplicity and the docility professed in the preamble were perhaps a trifle overdone. Jesus discerned the hypocrisy underlying, and, while a hush of attention and expectancy suspended the bystanders, he uncovered it with a word. "Why tempt ye me?" he said. After that, what hope of entrapping him unawares? "Bring me a denary," he said. "Whose is this image and superscription?" It was Cæsar's; that was too palpable for dispute, and it constituted a sign, not to be gainsaid, of an existing political condition. That political condition created certain unavoidable ob-

ligations, to deny which would be folly—would in fact be treason. Could Jesus be successfully tempted to commit this treason? If he could he would bring himself under the hostile hand and power of Rome. The hated Nazarene would thus be disposed of once and for all. On the other hand, should Jesus say, ‘Pay tribute,’ he would affront the patriot pride of the irresponsible crowd, and lose their support. They, the Jewish rulers, could then proceed against him without fear of exciting popular violence in his favor to their own undoing.

The dilemma was apparently insoluble. But Jesus solved it instantaneously without effort. “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,” he said. ‘Your obligation to Cæsar is outward, discharge it; your obligation to God is inward, discharge that. Do not imagine that, in withholding from Cæsar tribute in coin having Cæsar’s image, you act meritoriously, while you are at the same time withholding from God his due, namely, your own selves, created as you are with the ineffaceable mark of God’s image upon you.’ The Pharisees, with their Herodian helpers, were confounded and dumb.

The Sadducees took their turn. Their question to Jesus was one with which they no doubt had often perplexed the Pharisees. The Sadducees were the skeptics of their race and their time. They did not believe in such a thing as resurrection after death. So they supposed for Jesus the case of a woman married in succession to seven brothers, who die one after another, leaving her widowed. (The custom of the Jews in the matter of matrimony made such a supposition quite reasonable, leaving it remarkable only in the number of the successive marriages supposed.) The woman herself at last dies. “In the resurrection, whose shall she be?” they triumphantly asked. “Ye do err,” said Jesus, “not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.” There is an unmistakable, and a most overawing, majesty, be-

yond anything human, in the tone, the manner, with which thiſ is ſaid. There exiſts, Jeſus teaches thoſe Sadducees, no ſuch difficulty as they have imagined, to embaſſarr the doctrine of a future ſtate. In the reſurrection there is no marriage. The inhabitants are as angels. As to the fact of reſurrection, that, Jeſus teaches, iſ inextricably involved in the Scripture in which God, announcing himſelf to Moſes, ſays, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," ſaid Jeſus; "for all live unto him." God, that is to ſay, would not ſtyle himſelf the God of perſons who had been, but were not; of mere nonentities with names! "Ye do greatly err," ſaid Jeſus in concluſion. The Sadducees were ſilenced.

A ſcribe preſent was drawn to aſk Jeſus a queſtion in a ſpirit different from that of his baffled predeceſſors; and this queſtioner got a correſpondingly different answer. "What is the firſt commandment of all?" was the queſtion. And the answer was, in brief, 'Supreme love to God,' with this added, beyond the ſtrict answer, "The ſecond is this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbor as thyſelf." The ſcribe aſſented ſo heartily that Jeſus was moved to ſay, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

Chriſt's trial by queſtions was at an end. No man's courage was equal to entering thoſe liſts again. But Jeſus had ſtill his queſtions to propound. The following was one: "David in the Holy Spirit calls the Chriſt, Lord. How is the Chriſt David's ſon?" Nobody could answer. We now eaſily know that the Chriſt was David's ſon according to the fleſh, while according to the Spirit he was David's Lord. The common people were delighted with theſe diſcomfitures of the Phariſees and the doctors. Jeſus turned now to them, together with his own perſonal diſciples, and entered upon a ſtrain

of the heaviest reprobation directed against the Pharisees and scribes. This ends in a sevenfold woe denounced upon them. The thunders, however, of righteous indignation and wrath die away in a tone of relenting sorrow over Jerusalem; the third, and not even yet the last, recurrence of that pathetic refrain. There was leisure to Jesus amid such occupations of his mind and his heart, to sit and watch what went on at the treasury of the temple. Here he pronounced that memorable commendation of his upon the widow's mite.

An incident not seeming to be in itself very noteworthy appears to us now, in the Evangelist John's account of this day, invested with a peculiar interest—an interest not only significant and solemn, but withal somewhat mysterious. Certain Greeks, from the Decapolis probably (Decapolis names a region of Palestine lying, like Perea, east of the Jordan), and probably "proselytes of the gate" so-called (that is, Gentile proselytes to Judaism, not circumcised), expressed to Philip—whom perhaps they knew, he being of Bethsaida in the same region with themselves—a desire to see Jesus. Philip tells his fellow townsman Andrew; and they two together, Andrew apparently taking the lead, tell Jesus. The answer of Jesus is remarkable.

It does not appear whether or not the desire of the Greeks to see him was gratified. But Jesus, in answer to his two disciples, breaks out into a strain of expression not to have been at all forecast as likely to be used by him on such an occasion. He would almost appear to have recognized, in this application from Gentiles to see him, a sign from his Father that the end for himself was now indeed nigh at hand. He had an immediate face-to-face vision of his "hour." He exclaimed, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified." The being glorified was a sequel to suffering, and a result of that. This is implied in the figure in which the Saviour goes on to express himself. What a depth of

self-devotion and self-sacrifice is to be discerned in his words! "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

The Lord's future, in his present prevision of it, did not stop short in his tomb. It took in his own resurrection and the boundless fruit of salvation to others which that event would bear. The Lord remembered, for application to himself, his own instruction to his disciples, and said: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." He would have others do as he himself was doing: "If any man serve me, let him follow me." There should then be no separation either in place or in lot between the servant and his Master: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will the Father honor." But the solemn joy in the Saviour's heart does not triumph so as not to feel a sinking, a shudder, in prospect of what lay for him between this and that: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" The question was like the momentary loss of foothold experienced by a man in fording a stream suddenly become too deep for his height. The foothold of this divine-human struggler was immediately regained: "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." The bitterness of death was past, when those words could be said. There came a voice out of heaven saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The voice was not so much for Jesus, as for those with him who heard it—in vain! Against what light they sinned, those unbelieving Jews! Yet some, nay, many, even of the rulers, did believe, but they concealed their belief. "For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God."

Those simple, dull-witted, slow-hearted disciples! After all that they had heard, this day and before, from

Christ, of the doom of Jerusalem, they could not repress their rustic wonder and delight at the magnificence of the temple, built as if to last forever, like the hill itself on which it stood. They called the Lord's attention to the immense size of its stones and the splendor of the votive gifts that adorned its façades. This was probably while the Lord, with his disciples, was on his way from Jerusalem to Bethany. The admiring remarks of the disciples became to Jesus the occasion of the longest and the most detailed and specific of all his predictions. "Seest thou these great buildings?" said he; "there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." The walk then was perhaps continued, until, on the slope of Olivet over against the temple in full view across the vale of Kidron, the Lord sat down and, on the application of his disciples, resumed his prophetic discourse.

The interpretation of this discourse has always been a matter of much debate with expositors. Some think that with the destruction of Jerusalem here foretold was blended, in a manner to leave the two things difficult of separation, the "end of the world" (fulfilment of the age), understood in a much larger sense of the expression than that in which this idea is involved in the passing away of the Jewish state. Expositors who hold the view thus described look for a second coming of the Lord yet future. Another interpretation, which has the merit of great simplicity, maintains that the whole prophecy relates exclusively to the Lord's coming for the destruction of Jerusalem and for the various fulfilments associated by him with that great historic event. The sorrow of the Lord's heart, in sympathy for the city so much beloved and so unworthy, breaks out afresh in tragic hyperbole, hyperbole the chief tragedy of which is that it is not hyperbole at all, but literal statement of fact: "For those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath

not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be." The parable of the Ten Virgins and the parable of the Talents are incorporated in this amazing discourse. An august and awful panorama of the judgment of the great day is made in conclusion to pass before the imagination of hearer or reader, whose ears are left tingling at last with the sound, heard or imagined, of that final, fatal, irreversible sentence, "These shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life."

It was a contrast amounting almost to a paradox, when, immediately upon the conclusion of a discourse in which he had presented himself in a character of such sublimity as Judge of the world, Jesus proceeded yet again to tell his disciples that the Son of Man was to be delivered up for crucifixion. The date was imminent, and it was given by Christ with dreadful precision. It would be "after two days." What absolute self-command and sanity, what undisturbable equipoise of spirit, the conjunction of two things concerning himself so contrasted presupposes in the speaker! At perhaps the very same moment, the chief priests and the scribes were plotting his death. But they resolved that this should not be until after the feast. "The people" might raise a tumult. Man proposes and God disposes. It was to be *during* the feast, and that by the choice and act of him who was himself the true Passover! While Jesus was saying, "The Son of Man is delivered up," Judas, it may be, was darkly meditating his own purpose to deliver him. At any rate, he soon "went away" to the chief priests, and agreed with them to betray his Master for a price.

The last Wednesday was a day to the Lord of which there remains no record on earth. Perhaps he spent it in recovering strength, through pure rest, for the dreadful things that were before him. Perhaps he spent it

in communion with his Father, better to him, and more strengthening, than rest. Perhaps he spent it in the sweet domesticities of the home that welcomed him in Bethany, there partaking and dispensing the comfort of love. Perhaps he spent it in giving intimate instructions to his apostles. Perhaps he spent it in some way that mingled and harmonized all these different ends. We can only conjecture, where the silence of history is absolutely unbroken.

One feels it almost a relief to the tense tragedy of the Lord's prophetic mood, when the disciples intervene, as they do from time to time, with their unconscious interpositions of commonplace suggestion. A certain reassuring touch, as of every-day reality, is thus communicated to the overwrought mind. Thursday morning the disciples came to Jesus with the practical question, "Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the Passover?" Jesus with his disciples would constitute what, for the purposes of the feast, would be regarded as a family. And it was in "families," of not less than ten and not more than twenty persons each, that the Jews celebrated their Passover. The Lord answered the question asked him, in a manner that seems to imply desire on his part to keep his purposed movements from the immediate knowledge even of his disciples. Perhaps he sought to provide that no premature invasion proceeding from the treachery of Judas should violate his sacred last hours of privacy with his apostles. Peter and John were sent out to make the necessary preparations. They went, not themselves knowing exactly whither they went. They should learn, as they were going, by certain specified signs which they would meet on the way.

With an effect of solemnity, of intensity, and of pathos, which it seems as if no other than the simple rhetoric employed could possibly have produced, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," the Lord said, as, with the coming on of evening,

he sat down at the table prepared, with his disciples—that is, the twelve apostles—about him. Judas also was there. It seems incredible, but at that supreme moment for their Lord, those apostles strove with one another—perhaps for preeminence in place at table with him! If so, they probably thought that the precedent then established might have an important influence on their subsequent relative positions in the “kingdom,” when that was full come!

We wonder; but we do not wonder wisely, if we only condemn and do not consider that we ourselves, in those disciples' places, would probably have been not less inclined than they were to do as they did. We might have acted with much discreet disguise of our real motive and spirit; but no disguise would have availed with *him*.

Jesus taught his poor foolish contentious disciples, with an eloquent acted parable of humility and love. Fully conscious at the moment of his own divine mission and majesty, of his present investiture with universal authority, of his late coming hither from God and his speedy imminent going hence to God—with the clear consciousness, as John definitely affirms, of these things in his mind, and doubtless with an effect from the consciousness illumining his person and mien, that earthly-sojourning Jehovah rose from supper, and, amid the awestruck silent amazement of all, laid off his outer garments and took a towel and girded himself. Their Lord was now indeed among those disciples “as he that serveth!” He poured water into the basin—the imagination hears the gentle splash of that water poured out, breaking a stillness like the stillness of a sepulcher! He began to wash the disciples' feet. Such service was one that belonged to the meanest menial of a house. When Peter's turn, which may indeed have come first, was reached, that impulsive and impressionable spirit could not brook to keep silence. “Thou shalt never wash my feet,” he exclaimed. “If I wash thee not, thou hast no

part with me," the Lord replied. And so the round was completed, no omission of any, not even of Judas, from the lowly ministration. "Know ye what I have done to you?" the Lord inquired, when, with his garments resumed, he sat down again: "Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. . . I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you."

Jesus continued this strain of affectionate inculcation, intermingling admonition apparently intended for the special heed of Judas. There was no sign of relenting or repenting in that obdurate breast. But the tender heart of the Lord still beat itself against it in resisted appeal. The appeal resisted bruised the heart that made it, though on the heart that resisted it was wrought no impression. We are expressly told that Jesus "was troubled in spirit and testified." This language imports a peculiarly wounded and suffering mind. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me," were the words he spoke. The disciples looked one on another doubting of whom he spoke. There was then still a chance for Judas. He was not yet exposed as a traitor. As far as the company there present were concerned, the secret remained between himself and his Lord. If only he had felt the appeal thus made and recoiled from his crime! Even then, even then! But no. No wavering appears of that foul and fell resolve. Jesus adds one further word of warning. Will Judas, *can* Judas, still resist? "Woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had not been born." It was a boding knell sounded as if from the undisclosed recesses of the world to come. It *must* make the traitor blench.

The traitor did not so much as hear it! He had deafened his *soul*! While he had ears to hear, he did not hear; and his power of hearing was now gone. Judas had the horrible coolness to ask, "Is it I, Rabbi?"

There was no further hope. And Jesus answered, "Thou hast said." This was perhaps in a low tone, and not heard by the rest of the company. But to them, too, Jesus gave a sign by which they also understood who the traitor was.

Up to this moment, it was probably still in Judas's mind not to betray his Master until after the feast. But the Lord was to suffer *as* the Passover, and it should be at the time of the Passover. He said in an undertone to Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly." This was after Satan had entered into Judas—not by force, but as Judas's own invited guest. The Lord's words are to be taken not as an urgency to do, but as an urgency not to delay. Judas's crime was already irreversibly committed in Judas's soul. It remained only to reveal his crime in act. And that revelation must be immediate. So the Lord willed it, and so it was. Judas went out straightway; and it was night.

A symbolic night!

There is hopeless disagreement among biblical scholars as to whether or not Judas was present when our Lord, on the night on which he was betrayed, instituted the observance of the Supper in memorial of himself. This, on the occasion of its institution, was in a manner grafted upon the Passover meal. "This is my body which is given for you," the Lord said, when he broke the loaf. "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many," the Lord said, when he gave the cup containing "fruit of the vine" to his disciples. The memorial of himself was to be forever a memorial of a suffering Saviour, a Saviour suffering vicariously. When they had sung a hymn—the One Hundred and Eighteenth Psalm was the customary closing hymn for Passover occasions—they went out into the Mount of Olives.

Either while on his way to this retreat of his, or else

while lingering still, seated perhaps at first, and afterward standing, together with his disciples, in that chosen upper room, Jesus uttered discourse, reported only by John, which, from its peculiarly intimate quality, has been not inaptly called the "holy of holies" of Scripture. This discourse is found in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John's Gospel. At the end of the fourteenth chapter occur the words, "Arise, let us go hence," which may mark a point at which the position of all was changed from sitting to standing. The thought then, it may be, was to go out at once; but last words welled up so in the overflowing fountain of that unfathomable affectionate heart, that he delayed starting, in order to utter them more at leisure, in the quiet and seclusion where he was. This discourse, with the prayer forming as it were a part of it, cannot be here reproduced. It has an ineffable quality of purity and depth in which the intellectual and the spiritual elements so blend that they seem to be the same, the one interchangeably becoming the other. There is nothing else like it in literature. The utterances of Socrates about to die, as reported by Plato, come nearest resembling it. But they approach resemblance only as the highest merely human can approach the incarnate divine.

When the farewell discourse of the Lord died away in the cadences of that heavenly prayer, the hour could not have been far from midnight. According to our manner of dividing time, it was already perhaps Friday when the little band reached the place called Gethsemane, on the western slope of Olivet. The story of that Friday belongs in a chapter by itself.

Meantime it deserves forever from his disciples grateful intelligent recognition and note that in appointing that simple and beautiful and profoundly significant memorial of himself which we call the Lord's Supper, Jesus established, for the future observance of Christians a rite that would in the sequel constitute an imperishable

monument attesting to all time the historic reality of the scene in which the appointment was made, and, by inseparable association, attesting also the historic reality of the life and the death portrayed in the Gospels. Additionally there was provided in that rite a visible sign in act whereby Christ's disciples might remind themselves again and again, as often as they observed it, of the fact of an atonement for sin accomplished by Jesus in the shedding of his blood, and whereby they might impressively show this fact to a beholding world. It would be impossible to account reasonably for the origin of this rite in any other way than through the assumption that it was instituted by Jesus himself on the occasion and in the manner described by the Evangelists. The Lord's Supper, surviving continuously through more than nineteen centuries of time, is thus seen to be nothing less than a miraculous acted attestation of Christianity in its true essence of doctrine, and moreover of Christianity as an indestructibly historic religion.

XXXIII

GETHSEMANE

FRIDAY began to the Lord with an hour of darkness and agony. "Sit ye here," he said to his disciples, on entering the wooded seclusion ("garden," so-called) of Gethsemane, "while I go yonder and pray." He retired a little way, taking with him Peter, James, and John. The human heart in him desired the conscious touch and support of human sympathy. He told the chosen three, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." This is a very different tone from the serene courage of Socrates's cheerful welcome to death. There is but one explanation of the difference that can save the credit of Jesus as a man to be compared with Socrates for fortitude of spirit. That explanation however is simple, and it is sufficient. Socrates had only the burden of his own personal fate to bear; Jesus bore the weight of the sins of the world. Jesus must have sustaining help that no human sympathy could give him. From even those three preferred of his disciples, he withdrew while he should pray alone. He fell on his face—no posture other than that would suit the utter prostration of his spirit.

We know the prayer that he prayed. It was prayer for deliverance from what was before him to bear: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." It was an unspeakable agony of recoil. It almost equaled—it did not quite equal—the counter agony of submission. The throe and wrestle of that agony would have drained his strength; it *did* drain his strength; but his strength was replenished by an angel from heaven. And now

the pressure of his agony forced from him a sweat that became as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Thrice he interrupted his prayer by return to his disciples, where he had asked them to stay and watch with him. Each time he found them sleeping—witness less of their unfaithfulness to their Master than of the strain to which they had themselves been subjected through that week of trial and this night of vigil. With gentle rally to their spirits, the Lord hid, without wholly hiding, his own disappointment in missing the human sympathy he longed for; and at length he said: “Arise, let us be going; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand.”

At the head of a band of men with lanterns and torches and weapons, Judas was coming to find his Master. He well knew the Lord's habit of resorting to this place. The time was that of full moon, but the night may have been clouded and dark. Or there may have been, with the Lord's enemies, a suspicion that, to escape apprehension, he would secrete himself in some one of the caves with which the region abounded. Hence the lanterns and torches. The preconcerted sign was a kiss from Judas to Jesus, to indicate which one of all to arrest. The traitor had exhorted his employers to make sure of their prisoner. Jesus went forth calmly to meet his captors. “Whom seek ye?” said he. “Jesus of Nazareth,” they said. “I am he,” the Lord replied. Whether they did not quite trust Judas's kiss, or whether in the uncertain light, they had not seen it, or whether there was something in the demeanor of Jesus that dazed them and bewildered their wits, those soldiers and officers were apparently not yet assured of their man. But on the Lord's announcement of himself, they, instead of advancing at once to seize him, went backward and fell on the ground. Judas seems to have been among those that fell.

Again Jesus asked them, "Whom seek ye?" They had doubtless recovered themselves. They said again, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said, "I told you that I am he." The loyal disciples were at first minded to resist. One of them in fact—from John we know that it was Peter—drew his sword, and, making a thrust with it, wounded the right ear of a servant of the high priest. Malchus, John tells us, the name of this servant was. Peter's demonstration apparently was made at the moment of the first actual laying of hostile hands on the Lord. Jesus gently reproved the act, saying to Peter, "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Then, in the words, "Suffer ye thus far," meekly asking or majestically claiming leave from his captors to perform this healing service before submitting to be bound, he touched the wounded ear and made it whole. "Thinkest thou," the Lord added, to his wrongly zealous disciple, "that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" The Lord's reverence, so absolute, for the Scriptures—does it not sometimes seem almost less that of one who merely believed them as the word of another, than that of one who acknowledged them as his own word? His behavior here is as if he felt not only his filial obedience, but his personal veracity, to be pledged to their fulfilment. At the supreme moment, the crisis, of his agony in obedience as Son, he remembered what was foretold and promised concerning him in Scripture. That to him was the end of all human doubt, of all human hesitation. The "hour" was come, and Jesus would no longer postpone the inevitable end.

Their Lord, then, was going to submit to this arrest! The disciples conceived a sudden panic. They all forsook him and fled. All! Not even that valiant drawer of the sword remained. Not even "that disciple whom

Jesus loved"! They had indeed received a kind of dismissal from the Lord himself; for he said to his captors, "Let these go their way." We cannot wonder at the disciples' behavior.

To the chief priests and elders in that midnight crowd, Jesus said, "Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me." This could but remind his enemies how helpless they found themselves against him as long as it was the Father's will that he should go in and out before them unharmed. "But this is your hour," the Lord said to them, "and the power of darkness." The kingdom of Satan was permitted now to do its worst against him who had come to destroy it. It failed in nothing which in these last hours it attempted against Christ, except to shake the steadfastness of his filial obedience to his Father.

XXXIV

“MORE MARRED THAN ANY MAN”

THE band seized Jesus and bound him. They took him first to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest; and then from Annas to the high priest Caiaphas himself—this, however, not apparently until after an informal preliminary examination of the prisoner. (“Apparently,” we feel obliged to say; for comparison of the four Gospel accounts brings it into some doubt whether what John relates as if it occurred before Annas, was really meant by him to be so understood. Some students of the Gospels hold that it occurred before Caiaphas; and that we have no report of what passed before Annas.) Peter had rallied enough to follow his Master—at a distance; and with him came also another disciple, presumably John, to the high priest’s house to see the end.

The high priest—whether Annas or Caiaphas uncertain, both the two men seeming to have borne that title—asked Jesus of his disciples and of his teaching. Jesus answered in effect: ‘Thou needst not ask *me*. I never taught secretly. Ask those who have heard me teach.’ This reply was construed as disrespectful. One of the officers commended his own zeal on behalf of authority by striking Jesus, at the same time saying, “Answerest thou the high priest so?” Jesus remonstrates: “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?”

Peter, by coming to the high priest’s house, had prepared for himself a dreadful temptation. He sat among the officers, warming himself, as they were warming

themselves, by a charcoal fire which they had lighted in the court; for the weather was cold. There he was three times charged with being a disciple of Jesus; and there three times did Peter, though hero enough to take the risk of thus exposing himself, prove also coward and liar enough to say and swear that he was not Jesus' disciple, that he did not even know the man!

While Peter was uttering the last dreadful imprecation and perjury, a shrill clear sound smote inward from without upon the fallen apostle's ear. It was the crowing of a cock which marked the coming on of dawn. Peter was cut to the heart with that sound. He remembered how, when, but a few hours before, he was confidently vaunting his own eternal fidelity to his Master, that Master had told him, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Besides, the Lord had now turned and looked on Peter. Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Meantime, the rulers had already unanimously condemned the Lord to death. With this foregone murderous purpose in their mind, they had sought false witness against him; but they had not succeeded in finding any plausible enough to make even a specious case for justification of the capital sentence they were predetermined to pronounce upon him. The Lord himself supplied the witness that was wanting. The high priest formally asked him, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus no longer avoided the direct answer. His "hour" was come, and he said: "I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." This was what they sought. The high priest, in a paroxysm of hypocritical horror, rent his clothes and said to the assessors at his side: "Ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?" They, of course, thought as he thought; and they passed their sentence. The wicked excess of their

passion was then displayed. Some spat on Jesus; some covered his face, and, giving him blows, said: "Prophecy; who is he that struck thee?" They treated him with every Oriental device of truculence and scorn.

With the dawning of the day, the council (that is, the Sanhedrin) met in full frequency, and considered what to do, or rather how to do what they had already resolved upon doing. (This second meeting, by daylight, they must hold in order to legalize their proceedings.) The pretended trial proper now began. They had Jesus brought before them, and they gave him a second opportunity (which he embraced, "witnessing a good confession") to declare himself in express terms in his true character.

An unexpected incident, with a ghastly sequel, thrust itself into the course of the proceedings. Judas came to the chief priests and elders with his thirty pieces of silver. These burned his hand now. He could not hold them. The traitor told his employers, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they freezingly replied; "see thou to it." No comfort from that quarter—if peradventure Judas had hoped that his confession might undo what his treachery had done. He flung his burning thirty pieces of silver into the sanctuary of the temple and went away. But he carried with him a burning memory in his heart. There was no riddance possible of that. But was there none? Might he not have gone to the despised and rejected Jesus and found forgiveness? Satan in him had got his purpose served by him. That hard master would now torment his human tool with remorse; but he would not suffer him to find healing in true repentance. The maddened man was driven to suicide. It was a hideous suicide. Judas hanged himself; but that was not all. He fell from where he hung, and, cut perhaps as he fell with a point of jagged rock, burst asunder in the midst,

his bowels gushing from the gaping wound. If one could hope that Judas's punishment ended *then!*

The decision of the council was to get Pilate, the Roman governor, to do their deadly work for them. They led Jesus to him. At first they were disposed to carry matters before Pilate with a high hand. To his question, “ What accusation bring ye against this man ? ” they answered loftily. “ If this man were not a malefactor, we should not have delivered him up unto thee. ” Pilate was a weak man, but this style of browbeating was too open ; it did not succeed. The governor told the Jews, with a sarcasm which they, in their helpless national dependence, must have keenly felt, “ Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. ” This the Jews knew they could not do, at least not with that result to the prisoner which they desired—it being unlawful for them to inflict a capital penalty without express leave from Rome. So they condescended to frame an accusation.

It was an accusation craftily enough contrived. The prisoner, they said, had set himself up for king. Pilate asked Jesus, “ Art thou the King of the Jews ? ” Jesus confessed that he was. There was probably something in the manner of the confession, something in the manner of the man himself, that put Pilate at a loss. Jesus did not appear like a vulgar, ambitious, seditious pretender to kingly right. Indeed, he had already explained to Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world. “ Thou art a king then ? ” asked Pilate, sincerely mystified. Jesus assented, but said that he was come into the world to bear witness to the truth.

“ Truth ! ” “ The Truth ! ” The Roman world was a world of doubt, of skepticism. Pilate but represented it fairly, when he asked incredulously, “ What is truth ? ” The Jews' case began to look doubtful. The chief priests strengthened it with added accusations, to which Jesus

made no reply. Pilate was further put at loss by this silence of the prisoner. He asked, "Answerest thou nothing?" Even to Pilate, asking this, Jesus made not a syllable of reply. The governor was hopelessly non-plused. Still, the result was that he told the Jews, "I do not find crime in him." But the Jews did. They insisted. In the course of their insistence, it came out that Jesus was a Galilean. That suggested to Pilate an expedient. He would send the prisoner away to Herod, ruler of Galilee, who, happily, was at that moment in the city.

Herod was pleased with this opportunity to see Jesus. Such an opportunity he had long wished. He was curious to witness some wonder from this wonder-worker's hand. The result was a complete disappointment to his hopes; it was more; it was a deep wound to his pride. Not even one word could the monarch, with all his questions, elicit from the prisoner. To the Jews also, they meanwhile pressing their charges against him, Jesus was equally dumb. Herod took his revenge, a revenge worthy of his royal house, by heaping ignominies on this silent prisoner. He, with his soldiers, arrayed him in showy apparel and sent him back to Pilate. The two rulers, before at strife, became friends that day.

Pilate had the accused man on his hands again. He summoned the Jews and told them that Herod agreed with him in finding the prisoner innocent. He would therefore—"therefore!"—chastise the prisoner and release him. But the Jews were thirsty for more blood than the lash would cause to flow. The multitude, in their inconsequent way, began to clamor for a certain exercise of clemency on Pilate's part, an act of grace toward themselves, which they had come to expect yearly as their right. It was usual, as an annual act of governmental condescension, to discharge on popular demand some prisoner at the feast of the Passover. Pilate thought himself of an alternative. "Whom will ye that

I release unto you," said he, "Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ?" (There is some reason for supposing that this Barabbas also bore the name of "Jesus." The question would then be, "Which Jesus?")

Barabbas was one of a number of men then in prison accused of sedition and murder. Pilate hoped for relief to come from this alternative. He was becoming more and more deeply involved. His wife had contributed to the distracted governor's perplexity by sending word to her husband on the judgment-seat of an ill dream she had had. She warned him to do nothing against "that righteous man." "Which will ye have?" Pilate asked. The multitude, set on by the rulers, scandalized Pilate by crying out, "Barabbas!" "And Jesus the Christ—what shall I do with him?" asked the helpless governor. The answer was prompt, and loud, and many-voiced, "Crucify him!" *That* dreadful doom!

Pilate was horrified. "Why, what evil hath he done?" But the multitude were wild. They only cried out the more, "Let him be crucified!" Pilate, horror-struck before, was panic-struck now. The multitude cowed him, and he yielded. He performed a theatric ceremony to clear himself. He took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." Such blood clings like a mordant to the hand that sheds it. An ocean of water would not wash it away. The people were beside themselves. They were judicially mad. They answered and said, "His blood be on us, and on our children!" It was a dreadful imprecation upon themselves. God the avenger required that blood a hundred thousand fold at their hands. On the very spot where they stood crying those words, they and their children drenched the street to a river with their own blood.

Pilate discharged Barabbas, and Jesus he first scourged and then delivered to be crucified. An orgy now of brutal insolence and cruelty. They stripped Jesus of his

raiment and put on him a robe of scarlet (or of purple). They plaited a crown of thorns and pressed it on his brow. Into his hand they thrust a reed for scepter, and mockingly knelt before him, crying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat upon him. Snatching his reed-scepter from his hand, they smote him with it on his head.

This riot and revel of wanton wickedness passed within the court of the palace. Pilate now brought the meek sufferer out and showed him to the multitude. The purple robe was on him and the crown of thorns. The sacred violated flesh trembled and ran blood beneath the folds of that mock-imperial vestment. "Behold, the man!" the governor said. Perhaps Pilate thought that even yet the piteous sight would move the mob to compassion. And perhaps it did. But the "chief priests and officers" were implacable. They now screamed—apparently they alone—"Crucify him! Crucify him!" They were in haste to forestall any relenting on the part of the people.

Pilate recoiled from the crime proposed. Again he resorted to his sarcasm, "Take him yourselves, and crucify him." The Jews' case looked bad. In their desperation, they let slip what their real ground of offense in Jesus was. "He made himself the Son of God," they said. That escape from their lips worked against them. The governor was alarmed by it. He went into his palace, taking Jesus with him, and asked, "Whence art thou?" He perhaps had a qualm of superstitious fear. He might be dealing with a veiled divinity. But Jesus made no reply. Pilate was vexed as well as mystified. He tried browbeating his prisoner. "Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?" he asked. "Thou wouldst have no power against me," said Jesus, "except it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin."

Pilate was increasingly anxious to release this mysterious prisoner. The Jews, driven to extremity, urged their last plea. “ If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar’s friend.” It was a virtual threat to accuse Pilate before the Emperor Tiberius; a dangerous man he to offend, with his morbid jealousy of prerogative. Pilate hesitated no longer, though still paltering in a few weak and peevish attempts to save his dignity in yielding. He brought Jesus out once more and said, “ Behold, your King!” For answer, they yelled like one many-mouthed wild beast of prey thirsty for blood: “ Crucify him! Crucify him!” “ Crucify your King?” mocked Pilate. Those proud abjects, the chief priests, ate the very dust of servility in order to gratify their lust of innocent blood. “ We have no king but Cæsar,” they cried. It was a singular fulfilment of prophetic words: “ They gape upon me with their mouth as a ravening and a roaring lion.”

The soldiers led Jesus away to be crucified.

THE CROSS

BETWEEN sentence and execution no time intervened. It was murder rather than execution. They loaded upon Jesus the cross on which he was to suffer, and compelled him to bear it to the place chosen by them for the perpetration of their crime. This was without the city gate. The name of it was Golgotha, "the Place of a Skull." On the way thither, the Saviour perhaps fainted under his burden. Or, it may be that a horrible brutality of mirthful whim seized the crowd, prompting them to a wanton demonstration without cause. However it was, the cross was put upon another than Jesus to bear. A man of Cyrene coming from the country—his name is saved to perpetual memory, it was Simon—was pressed into the service. This Simon is noted by Mark as father of Alexander and Rufus, who were no doubt in Mark's time well-known disciples. Simon was perhaps himself a disciple. He may have testified his sympathy for his suffering Lord, and thus incurred the penalty (which in that case he would welcome) of bearing for Jesus a burden too great for Jesus' overtasked strength.

It was a mixed procession that followed Jesus to Golgotha. In it were many women, who bewailed and lamented him. The Lord turned to these and said, with heart-breaking tenderness in which no self-pity mingled, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children!" The image of that future for Jerusalem haunted his prophetic mind like a specter of blood! With Jesus were led two others, malefactors, to crucifixion.

Jesus was fully human, he was exquisitely human. The shame of his death was much to him. He shrank from it with indescribable recoil. Yet his victory over it was complete. It was present as an element of bitterness in his cup; it had to be reckoned; yet he "despised" it. He did not escape it; it was there; but he despised it. The pain, too, was horrible. It was a lingering death, the death of the cross. The victim survived in unrelieved suffering sometimes for days. On either side of Jesus, fixed each to his wood, hung the two malefactors that were to die in company with him this long death of anguish. The slow process began.

It was probably as the work of fastening the Saviour to his cross went on, that he uttered those words of superhuman grace, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If the prisoner had been treated, as in so-called Christian countries it is usual for condemned prisoners to be treated, with a certain measure of consideration and kindness; if the executioners had shown a compassionate reluctance to proceed with their office—the forgiving spirit exhibited by Jesus would have been less remarkable. But it was against every imaginable and unimaginable expedient of malignant exasperation already practised upon him; in prospect, too, of a prolonged continuance of such torment added to the unavoidable agonies of death by crucifixion—it was in the face of all this, that Jesus kept the unalterable sweetness of his good will toward his murderers, and prayed that prayer for them.

A potion mixed of wine and gall was given the Sufferer to drink, perhaps to relieve his sense of pain, perhaps to strengthen him for suffering longer. Jesus tasted but would not drink it. By prescription, the garments of the crucified belonged to the four soldiers detailed to perform the executioners' task. There, then, the soldiers that crucified Jesus sat, and watching meanwhile the dreadful tragedy, divided up the prize among themselves.

The coat, or tunic, they cast lots for, whose it should be; it was a seamless garment, and, "Let us not rend it," they said. John noted in this a fulfilment of Scripture.

The spectacle of those three sufferers on their crosses drew curious beholders. These were mostly hard-hearted, at least as toward Jesus. They regarded the fate that had now befallen him as a sufficient refutation of the claims that he had made for himself. They railed at him accordingly. Their taunts were directed with what they felt to be deadly aim. "Ha!" they derisively cried, "thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross." The triumphant chief priests and elders took their fill of sweet revenge. "He saved others," they exclaimed; "himself he cannot save. . . Let him now come down from the cross and we will believe on him." Passers-by joined in the ribald mockery. Nay, the companions of his doom, those robbers on either side of him, taunted their fellow sufferer, saying, "Art not thou the Christ?" But if both malefactors joined in this, one of them relented, and even reproached his fellow in crime and in punishment for continuing to insult the crucified Lord. More—his repentance and his faith rose to the height of a prayer to the Lord, uttered at the very moment of that Lord's nethermost humiliation and shame: "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." Jesus' promise in response went beyond the penitent's prayer: "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

There were faithful women standing by the cross of Jesus. Of these one was Mary, his mother. She realized now the meaning of those words of aged Simeon in the temple, "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul." That lacerated mother-heart! But it should be comforted with a last testimony of love from her Son—testimony that would draw healing tears in fresh flood

from her eyes! Jesus saw his mother, and, standing by her, that disciple whom he loved. He spoke to her. The words were few, and they were mere words, not a sentence; but they uttered all a mighty heart. "Woman," said he, "behold, thy son!" The hand might have pointed, had it not been nailed to the wood, toward John, the beloved disciple, who was the "son" meant. To that disciple Jesus said, "Behold, thy mother!" The commendation was understood and responded to. From that time, John took Mary to his own home.

The crucifixion began, it seems likely, at about nine o'clock in the morning. At full noon a darkness overspread the land, which lasted three hours. It was as if the planet, in mourning, put on sackcloth of black; it was as if the sun in heaven refused longer to behold that wickedness of man. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, a strange cry, the most lamentable ever heard on earth, proceeded from the lips of Jesus. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" were the words. The meaning was, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The words are the words of a psalm, the twenty-second. As uttered by the Lord, they mark an experience on his part that no finite being will ever, in time or in eternity, fully understand. That experience, it may well be supposed, was the element in the cup of the Lord's sufferings which he most of all dreaded. There is no record of any reassuring answer descending now, as twice before such answer had descended, from heaven. That sinless soul, sin-bearing, was apparently permitted to endure this sense of being forsaken by his God, without supporting sympathetic communication from above to relieve to him the unimaginable horror of it. That cup could not pass from him except he drank it. Eternity was crowded into a moment of time. But the cup passed—when he had drunk it. "I thirst!" he cried. A sponge dipped in vinegar was raised on a reed to his lips. He did not refuse it. He cried, not feebly as if

his strength were exhausted, but with a loud voice, and now a very different cry. "It is finished," he said; and, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." With these words, so uttered, the Lord bowed his head and gave up his spirit. No man took it from him, but he gave it up of himself.

And the veil of the temple (a curtain which hid the holy of holies from the eyes, much more, barred it from the feet, of men) was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Access into the holiest of all was thenceforward, by the blood of him, forever open to every child of Adam that would come.

Jesus had now died, in manner as he often foretold that he should die. Will he rise again, in manner as, equally often, he foretold that he should?

XXXVI

THE SEPULCHER

HE died.' That is the end of the story of every life lived on earth, with the one exception of the life that was brought to its apparent close with the crucifixion on Calvary. Of the story of the life of Jesus, death is not the end. Jesus lived again, lived an earthly life after dying, and the historian of Jesus cannot really accomplish his task without going on to tell as far as he may the story of that life after death.

But stay. We recall the case of Lazarus, with those other cases resembling his, and strict regard for truth in carefulness of statement obliges us to modify our characterization of the case of Jesus Christ as a quite solitary exception to the rule that prevails of earthly finality in death. And yet that which occurred to make modification necessary, was so brought about, and was of such a character, as still to leave the case of Jesus in true effect solitary and unique.

It is not surprising that the Roman centurion (who, with the soldiers under him, had been detailed to watch the three crucifixions in progress together) was awestricken, to witness the quaking of the earth and the rending of the rocks that attended the death of Jesus. Especially, however, according to the Evangelist Mark, it seems to have been the extraordinary peculiarity of that death, namely, the fact of the sufferer's crying out with a loud voice as he expired, that impressed the centurion. He exclaimed, "Truly this was a righteous man, truly he was Son of God." Was the centurion's faith a faith that saved him? Tradition gives him a name, Longinus,

and reports his becoming at length the bishop of Capadocia.

Infinitely pathetic it is to read that women, in great numbers, were present, at remove from the cross of Jesus, beholding all—among them faithful Mary Magdalene, and the other women who with her a little while before had followed in his company from Galilee to Jerusalem, ministering to him on the way. These women witnesses had stayed to the end; they saw everything, and they could make a full report.

Those Romans were wise rulers of conquered races. They indulgently humored the harmless wishes of their subjects. So now, when the Jews asked Pilate to have the three victims of the cross summarily dispatched that very day, and their bodies removed, for the reason that, should they die during the day following, the corpses hanging in sight would be a profanation to them of their Sabbath—that one particular Sabbath of the year being regarded by them as peculiarly sacred—Pilate easily granted them their request and sent soldiers to do the work. Customarily, so it seems, such hastening of death to the crucified was accomplished by the breaking of their legs. This of course would not always bring death immediately to the relief of the sufferer. Relief to the sufferer was far from being the object aimed at. The agony of the crucifixion, though it would indeed be shortened, would also be intensified, by the breaking of the legs. In addition to the pain resulting from the cruel blows, there would be the intolerable anguish resulting from inability on the part of the victim to shift in the least thereafter the posture of his body for one moment's miserable illusion of ease to his state. The speedier death to ensue, would be the result of the more terrible agony to intervene.

To their surprise, the soldiers, coming to perform their ruthless office, found Jesus already dead; his legs accordingly they did not break. But one of the soldiers,

in pure brutal wantonness it would appear, plunged his spear into the Saviour's side. Hereupon followed a remarkable result. There was an outflow of blood and water. This circumstance has been held by some, on physiological grounds of much plausibility, to be a proof that the immediate cause of death in the case of Jesus was a literal, physical rupture of the heart.

The apostle John is the only one of the four Gospel historians who relates these last circumstances, but he relates them with a singularly impressive note of comment. He says: "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe." John also adds, "These things came to pass that the Scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." The reference here is to the direction given in Exodus (and repeated in Numbers) that no bone of the lamb eaten in Passover should be broken—a noteworthy direction, best understood when it is considered that the Passover lamb constituted a type of that Lamb of God which Jesus was, and that his exemption from suffering the fracture suffered by his fellow victims was divinely foreordained to occur, and divinely foreordained to reflect back a reason for what might otherwise seem a singular direction in Exodus.

So now the crucifixion was accomplished and the Victim was dead. The day was Friday and the hour was near sunset. At sunset the Jewish Sabbath would begin, and it would be a "high" Sabbath. As has already been pointed out, it would be peculiarly offensive to the national idea of the sanctity of Sabbaths in general and of a "high" Sabbath in particular, should bodies of crucified persons be left exposed on the crosses on which they had suffered. Ordinarily the Romans left such bodies indefinitely thus exposed, until the flesh rotted away or until carrion birds or beasts of prey devoured

it. Crucifixion was not a Jewish method of capital punishment; the Scripture expression about "hanging on a tree" did not refer to cases of crucifixion; but to cases in which, death having been otherwise inflicted, the corpses were hung on a tree (for judicial punitive reasons and for deterrent warning)—left there a short time only, never all night. The expression lent itself easily and naturally to application in cases of crucifixion accomplished later under Roman rule; and, with equal ease and naturalness, the Mosaic law requiring a body hung on a tree to be removed the very day of its being hung there, was held to apply to a body hung on a cross.

The toil, the agony, and the shame of the Saviour's earthly experience were completely finished; and there now occurs an incident which may be held to mark the beginning of a grateful change, a prelude to his entrance into glory. For that sacred body was, in accordance with ancient prophecy, to receive an honorable burial, and the divine sufferer was to lie "with the rich in his death." Joseph, a citizen of Arimathea—the two proper names become forever of precious memory in virtue of the incident—applies to Pilate for leave to take possession of the body of Jesus. Joseph was a rich man and a man of high degree. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, but he had not agreed with his colleagues in their counsel against Jesus.

It required some boldness in Joseph to make this request of Pilate, or at any rate he made his request "boldly" in the teeth of the hostility of his fellow counsellors; and Pilate granted it. But first Pilate took the precaution to learn from the centurion whether Jesus was indeed so soon dead. The unusual suddenness of the death excited in him surprise, and it would seem some incredulity—although his incredulity he civilly veiled, by asking his officer whether he had been "any time" dead.

Nicodemus too, perhaps emboldened by the example and companionship of Joseph, now took an honorable part in paying homage to the memory of that Lord deceased whom he had once visited by night. Joseph and Nicodemus together took down from the cross the body of Jesus—whether with their own hands or by the hands of persons employed for the purpose, is not told—and wrapped it in a clean [that is, pure white] linen cloth provided by Joseph, with mingled myrrh and aloes provided by Nicodemus to the generous weight of some hundred pounds. Joseph possessed a tomb, hewn out of the solid rock, in a garden near the place of the crucifixion, and in this tomb, never before used, they laid the body of Jesus. Before leaving the tomb they closed the door of it with a huge stone, to make it safe against violation.

Joseph and Nicodemus, having thus performed their reverent office to the dead, withdrew from the sepulcher. But those loyal and loving women who before had followed Jesus and ministered to him—the two Marys are named again for everlasting remembrance—had watched the burying, and they were not content without taking themselves some active part in doing honor to the body of their Lord. Retiring from the sepulcher, they prepared spices and ointment for the more meet embalment of that sacred flesh, to be accomplished after the Sabbath; but “on the sabbath day they rested according to the commandment”—a touching incidental reminder to us deserving our heed, of the obedient spirit which, even at such a moment, animated and controlled those lovely women as to the reverent keeping of the Sabbath.

Those women “rested.” Not so the chief priests and Pharisees. They still plotted. Matthew tells us how: They, he says, “were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third

day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a guard [or take a guard]: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them."

Again, how this great stone was removed and the guard disposed of, it is Matthew that tells us: "Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. And behold there was [that is, had been] a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it [sign to the guard that the stone was not to be replaced]. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers shook, and became as dead men."

The preparations made both by Joseph and Nicodemus and by those faithful women, to bury their Lord, certainly seem to indicate that they had no expectation of his speedy rising from the dead. There was indeed no sentiment in the breast of a single one of the disciples adapted to favor the springing up anywhere of any illusory belief, any belief not warranted by fact, in the resurrection of Jesus. He was consigned to the tomb with affectionate reverence, but also with affectionate sorrow unrelieved by hope—this on the part of *all* the disciples—quite as if the tomb was to be the final resting-place of their crucified Lord.

What conceivable cause—the question is irrepressibly asked as it were by the very situation—what conceivable cause, except the fact itself of his actual resurrection, could have given rise to immediate immovable subsequent conviction wrought into so many unprepared and incredulous minds, that he indeed, within a few hours

from his shameful death on the cross, rose in power and glory living from his grave? But so to state the question is vastly to understate it. There is something besides change to belief from disbelief to be accounted for. There is to be accounted for the contrast in bearing and behavior between Christ's disciples as they were at the time of his arrest and crucifixion, and those same disciples as they were very soon after his death and burial.

Consider. At the moment of his arrest, they all forsook him and fled. They were abjectly afraid. The boldest of them all in his craven fear denied with oath upon oath that he had ever known the man, his Master! Such had been their attitude. A few days and all was changed. Those who, while their Lord was yet living and not yet condemned, had played the poltroon, were, now that he was dead, having died as a condemned malefactor—these men, become suddenly superior to fear, were ready to brave danger, to welcome death, in his name. The contrast of the day of Pentecost, and after, is to be accounted for. What accounts for it, what can account for it, but the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ?

XXXVII

THE RESURRECTION

THE statement will strike many readers as strange, even startlingly strange, but it is nevertheless the fact that there exists in the New Testament no narrative, no mention even, directly and expressly made, of the event itself, the great act, of the rising from the dead of the crucified Redeemer. Interesting, most interesting, entrancing, narrative and descriptive details are given of things that took place in connection with the resurrection, before it and after it. But the resurrection itself—that is not directly either narrated or described in the Gospels. Why?

No human eyes beheld the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There were therefore no human eye-witnesses of the event who could, if they would, have borne their testimony concerning it, as a thing that they saw and heard in act with their bodily senses. If scientific certainty requires the production of such testimony, it must at once be acknowledged that scientific certainty is in this case not to be had. Is there then, without testimony from eye-witnesses of the fact in question, no possibility of proving the reality of the resurrection? None, it must be replied; that is, in the forum of demonstrative science no possibility.

But in the forum of reason and common sense the possibility abounds. And it may by the way be said that eye-witness testimony, such as was possible in the conditions existing at the era of the alleged resurrection, were it indeed forthcoming, would not satisfy the rigorous exaction of the "science" of to-day. To meet modern scientific demand, the risen one would need to

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have been beforehand authoritatively pronounced truly dead, this after the application of infallible tests; and then besides it would be necessary for him, after resurrection, to have submitted to be examined for ascertainment of the fact that he was now truly alive. In short, it is out of the question, it is ridiculously out of the question, to meet the requirements of an historical criticism which, in its heart of hearts, is fixed, on no evidence whatsoever, to admit anything that partakes of the nature of what it pleases to call the supernatural.

The fact, however, that the Gospel accounts relating to the resurrection of Christ abstain from narrations or descriptions of that momentous event, as being an object of actual human observation, is in itself, wisely considered, a feature of the history that strongly attests its sane and sober adherence to reality and truth. Myth, or legend even, would unquestionably have arranged matters so that the stupendous phenomenon should take place openly and spectacularly, under the eyes of awed and astonished and perhaps affrighted spectators. Legend would never have hidden the august transaction in the darkness of a sepulcher closed and sealed from the sight of human eyes. Jesus was, however, seen dead by many witnesses who afterward saw him alive. That a resurrection from the dead intervened is only an inference, but it is an irresistible inference—except to a mind obsessed with incurable prepossession against admitting the occurrence of anything supernatural.

Nothing possible to human imagination could exceed the solemn and majestic fitness of both the reticence and the disclosure with which Scripture history treats the subject of the resurrection of Christ. The surrounding circumstance and incident of the occasion are too sublimely conceived, too simply described and—dismissed, to be sanely regarded as mere matter of human fabrication. They attest themselves as not fancy but fact, as not human but divine. So to me it ungainsayably seems;

but I am compelled to recognize the fact that, notwithstanding such a character strongly felt by me in the New Testament record, there is rife, at this living moment of time, a disposition among even professedly Christian students of Scripture, to criticize away the resurrection narratives, to dissolve and dissipate the solid matter of history in them into the vanishing vapor of unreality, of mere psychical subjective impression.

It may shock, but if so, the shock I think will be tonic and sanative, if I show here, in violent contrast to the convincing simplicity and naturalness of the New Testament writers' testimony on the subject (in close sequel to be shown) a specimen expression, which will be accepted by the most scientific, most enlightened, of present-day New Testament students as truthfully exhibiting in very words of its own the calmly, frigidly, assured and definitive spirit and method with which it is the latest destructively critical fashion to do away with the reality, the glorious reality, of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, from the dead.

"Jesus" is the title of a German work, written by Arno Neumann, translated by Maurice A. Canney and prefaced by P. W. Schmiedel. Schmiedel says in his "Preface" that the "view of the Life of Jesus which it ["Jesus"] embodies is in all essentials identical with that maintained by myself in the articles GOSPELS, JOHN, MARY, MINISTRY, RESURRECTION, SIMON PETER, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*."

I may here interrupt myself to say of those two names, Neumann and Schmiedel, that they stand for two accepted foremost modern New Testament scholars of the reigning critical school. No representative of this school could be quoted carrying more weight than does Schmiedel supporting Neumann. My readers may rely upon it that they here see the latest scientific destructive, claim-

ing to be constructive, New Testament criticism, in its very best, its strongest, expression—a quasi-authoritative expression, as I have already pronounced it.

Doctor Neumann, in Chapter XVIII, THE RESURRECTION FAITH, says:

“ In the case, therefore, of Jesus’ various appearances
“ to his disciples we have to do with *visions* merely, and,
“ unless we choose to think of God as creating the image
“ afresh on each occasion, simply with such visions as
“ result from subjective experiences in the minds of
“ those who see them. The visionary himself, of course,
“ believes these inward experiences to be overpowering
“ facts in the outside world, and nothing less. Nor are
“ visions seen by a multitude of persons at once, as de-
“ scribed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, to be regarded as
“ mere fables. History and psychological science vouch
“ for the possibility of this also. Similar experiences
“ have repeatedly happened—during the Crusades, in the
“ life of the cloister, in the experience of pilgrims, and
“ generally in times of religious exaltation. . . The
“ account we have just given of what happened after
“ Jesus’ death . . . rests upon a calm and dispassionate
“ examination of the New Testament sources. We have
“ started with the oldest and therefore most reliable
“ source, Paul the apostle’s account of the matter. . .
“ Paul . . . gathered together with the greatest care all
“ the information he could find about the resurrection,
“ and drew up, so to speak, a catalogue of all the appear-
“ ances of the risen Master, placing them in their exact
“ historical order. . . Paul, and with Paul, history, had
“ no information about the empty grave; in the second
“ place, neither was aware that the women took such a
“ prominent part in the events of Easter morning. . .

“ As for the nature of those historically established ap-
“ pearances of Jesus, the words of Paul are once more
“ our only guide. Paul assures us that the risen Master

“had ‘been seen’ or had ‘appeared’ on six occasions. “Of his having spoken, of his eating and drinking, or of “his having been touched, he says not a word. Paul’s “account, in fact, represents his own experience on the “way to Damascus to have been of quite the same nature “as those other appearances which disciples of Jesus “Christ individually and in the mass had experienced “after his departure. The vision he had himself re- “ceived, therefore, was in his view no less real than the “experiences of the original apostles. And this shows “us clearly that in all these cases alike we are dealing “simply with experiences within the soul.”

So much from Neumann endorsed by Schmiedel. A note or two now of criticism on this critic: No evidence exists to support his uncritical assertion that Paul “gathered together with the greatest care all the information he could find about the resurrection.” The appearance rather is that in the heat and urgency of composition he simply presented *sufficient* “information” for his immediate purpose, that of convincing or of silencing Corinthian disbelievers. True, Paul does not enter into any detail of circumstances attending these appearances; as a matter of practical purpose, even as a matter of rhetorical literary art, it would have been quite out of place for him to arrest the rush of his reasoning and his eloquence with any such circumstantial narrations as those which this very uncritical critic significantly misses—namely, of “his having spoken,” of “his eating and drinking,” of “his having been touched”—misses, with the obvious object of thus making Paul’s proofs more susceptible of his intended “psychic” explanation. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul admittedly does not speak of the risen Christ as having spoken, but twice in the Acts he is reported by Luke as relating that Jesus spoke. This, however, is not quite first-hand from Paul. It is therefore excluded from consideration in severely

strict historical criticism. Our critic calmly *assumes* that Paul's Damascus experience was a matter of hallucination, and thence calmly *infers* that all the other disciples' experiences were hallucinations also. By a force of illusion quite characteristic of his school of criticism, he thus arrives at his wished-for goal, in the conclusive sentence, "This shows us clearly that in all these cases alike we are dealing simply with experiences within the soul."

I need only exclaim, What criticism! What logic!

In generous reaction and recoil from sterile aridities, superficialities, futilities, such as those of this critic, my readers will I trust be the better prepared to relish and enjoy the delightfully self-evidencing simple truthfulness of the lovely stories, now presently to be shown, that cluster about the forsaken sepulcher of the risen Redeemer.

By means of the foregoing quotation, I have simply, let me in repetition say, exhibited, in what may be accepted as a quasi-definitive expression in words of its own, the current ruling fashion followed among "modern" New Testament scholars and critics in disposing "scientifically," psychologically, of the Gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus. The theory is sometimes very elaborately argued with great subtlety and great superficial ingenuity, not without specious show of candor and convincingness.

With much exercise of patience, my own and the bravely persistent reader's as well (should any such reader bravely persistent *enough* be found!), I entertained and examined the argument at some length in a volume preceding this, entitled "Concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The reader of these pages is respectfully referred to that book. See the chapter in it interrogatively entitled, "Misunderstood?" wherein I diligently sought to do what a certain highly competent judge, an accomplished university professor, thinks I

succeeded in doing. He picturesquely writes: "This explanation [the psychical] is so subtle and ostensibly modern as to be most misleadingly attractive; but you have succeeded in hunting it into and out of all its holes of hiding." The accurate discernment displayed by this reader, of my purpose and my effort in the chapter referred to, together with the neat turn of language in which he expresses himself, constituted a temptation that I could not resist to show his sentence here. I trust the unconventionality of my thus quoting it in my own behalf, and in behalf of the truth, will be held pardonable.

XXXVIII

“MARY!”

THE four different New Testament accounts of the circumstances and incidents accompanying the resurrection of Jesus are, all of them, each in its own peculiar way, divinely beautiful; but the account given by John is an idyll, a series of idylls, possessing a charm perhaps beyond that of any other. Mary Magdalene stands out distinct in the foreground of John's picture, almost as if she were alone in her experience at the sepulcher. No one is named, or expressly alluded to, by John as accompanying her. From John's account it would seem that the instant Mary saw that the stone (concerning which the anxious question had been asked, "Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the tomb?"—"for it was exceeding great," Mark says) had been removed—the instant Mary saw this, she turned back, and quickening her steps to a run, came to Peter and John and told them what she had seen. She apparently assumed, without entering, without even looking in, that the sepulcher had been robbed of its precious deposit. "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb," she said, "and we know not where they have laid him." (That word "we" from John shows incidentally that he did not mean to represent Mary as having been without companionship in her early morning visit to the sepulcher. It is an unobtrusively, as it were an accidentally, harmonizing word. It leaves us free to suppose that though Mary may have come up first to the sepulcher, either alone or accompanied only by "the other Mary," the "rest of the women," "many" probably, who came up with Jesus to Jerusalem from Galilee, were close at hand, bear-

ing the spices for the embalming. To these women an angel appeared, and spoke the reassuring words recorded in substantially the same language by all the three Synop-
tists: "Fear not; I know that ye seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples and Peter, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.")

What immediately followed Mary's startling report to Peter and John was exquisitely natural, and inimitably true to the individual characters of the two disciples. Peter was the one to start, but John too started, and they went "toward the tomb." This form of language, giving the direction only of their movement, and not a definite aim, may imply that at first the aim of their movement was not perfectly clear to themselves. Perhaps they may at first vaguely have thought of rallying some of their fellow disciples, to take counsel with them as to what, in this strange state of things, should be done. But once started, and started in that direction, they struck into a run which soon brought them to the sepulcher. It is an unmistakable trait of simple fidelity to fact, that the Evangelist notes for us which disciple ran the faster. It was John, who accordingly got first to the tomb. He stooped and looked in, but he did not enter. He, however, took careful enough observation from without to note the linen cloths lying there which Arimathean Joseph had provided for wrapping the dead body of Jesus.

Meantime Peter came up, and he, like the man that he was, went into the tomb. He made a still more careful, or at least a more detailed, observation than had been John's, of the state in which the tomb had been left by the late occupant, now risen. He too noticed the linen cloths, but also the napkin that had been wrapped about the sacred head. This was not, he observed, with

the linen cloths; it was folded up in a place by itself. This is realism, not the conscious realism of art—such realism had not then been thought of, least of all in that non-literary land and with unpractised writers like the Evangelists. It was the artless realism of simple fidelity to fact. (Such *minutiæ* of narration, by the way, *such* *minutiæ*, are not of the nature of late glorifying "myth.") Peter, perhaps from within the tomb, to John, standing without, reported his observations. At any rate, somehow attracted, John followed Peter into the tomb.

And now, did John go a step beyond Peter in the right direction? For it is said of John that "he saw and *believed*"—which observably is not said of Peter. That expression, "and believed," implies plainly enough that previously John himself had not believed in the resurrection of Jesus, either as a fact that was to be accomplished, or as a fact that had been accomplished. The explanation of this previous failure to believe, is given in the statement, "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." Had they known that scripture concerning the Christ, they would have understood and believed their living Lord's own predictive words concerning himself. The conclusion of the visit of Peter and John to the tomb of the Saviour is simply told, and it seems somehow, in contrast to Mary's behavior, a surprising, not to say a disappointing, conclusion; at least it does not read like a "myth": "So the disciples went away again unto their own home."

"But Mary"—so John continues his story, using the conjunction, "but." He felt the contrast about to be shown. "But Mary stood weeping without at the tomb." Still weeping, she stooped and looked into the tomb. What she saw was very different from what Peter and John had seen. She saw two angels. "In white," is the only description given in this case of the appearance of these strangers from heaven. They were

sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. It is not said that she was "affrighted" or even "amazed"; whether it was that a certain preparedness in herself for heavenly vision prevented any such agitation of spirit, or that the angels graciously took on for her an appearance less dazzling, we can only conjecture. It may have been that her complete preoccupation of mind with her love and her sorrow, precluded the possibility of any other emotion than these two within her. The angels addressed her, of course only one of them speaking: "Woman, why weepst thou?" "Because they have taken away my Lord"—it is "my Lord" now to the angels; it was "the Lord" before to Peter and John. The relationship of Jesus was common to *them* with herself; but how should she know that the same was also the case as between herself and those two strangers? So she said "my Lord," in speaking to them. She added pathetically, "and I know not where they have laid him." Mary was now at least without human companionship there, and she could not say, "*we* know not"; "I know not," were her words.

It is noteworthy that the angel is not reported to have spoken anything in reply to Mary. It is noteworthy that she does not wait for anything to be spoken by him to her in reply. We may conjecture a reason for each case. The angel doubtless knew what presence still more potent than his own to reassure was at hand, though for the moment unguessed by Mary, as certainly unseen by her. Unseen, but, who can say? perhaps not altogether unfelt. A certain obscure attraction from behind her may, insensibly to herself, have caused her to turn round. At all events, turn round she immediately did, and saw—Jesus himself standing by.

But that divine Friend did not suffer himself to be instantly recognized by Mary. For this favored woman he had a more intimately gracious way of self-disclosure, a way held back for a moment in loving re-

serve. He asked her a question, two questions indeed. “Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?” With an infinitely tender play of postponement, to make sweeter to Mary the purposed surprise of the sequel, he permitted himself to appear outwardly to her such that, in the all-absorbing, intent, affectionate preoccupation of her mind, drowned as it was in a flood of sorrow from the sense of irreparable loss, she could imagine him to be the keeper of the garden.

Mary does not answer either one of his questions, but says, “Sir, if thou hast borne him hence”—“Him”! only the word, “him”! She does not tell “whom.” She does not dream it can be necessary. For herself, she thinks of no one else in the whole universe, and of course this gardener cannot help knowing whom, when she says simply, “him.” “Tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away,” she adds, finishing her sentence. *She* would take him away—that unaccompanied, unassisted woman! True, she could readily find assistance enough; but of that she probably never thought, nor of where she would lay “him” for safer sepulture than had proved to be the sepulture of Joseph’s tomb. Her love and her sorrow made her feel equal to anything that might go even a little way toward satisfying those feelings in her heart. The devotion thus manifested could not but be as the odor of sweet ointment poured forth, to him who a little while before accorded such touching recognition to that costly anointing of his person from the hands of another Mary, “She hath wrought a good work upon me.”

The risen Jesus recompenses this devotion. He recompenses it with a word. A sufficing recompense—the word is her name. “Mary!” he says. Apparently she had reverted her look toward the tomb, away from the supposed gardener; for now, hearing that word, in that voice, she “turns herself,” it is said, and exclaims, “Rabboni!”—which is “Master,” John explains. The sur-

prised and delighted Mary seems therewith to have made some motion as if to touch his person, perhaps even to clasp at least the feet of her Lord in worship. Her Lord declines the touch, giving a reason that it is difficult to understand. "Touch me not," he says, "for I am not yet ascended unto the Father." A great many attempts have been made to explain the reason thus given to Mary for her not touching the risen Jesus; but no one of the attempts that have fallen under my eye seems to me certainly successful. (This, however, may be said by the way, that a reason so difficult to understand is very little likely to be the product of a myth-making process. The same thing still more strongly may be said of the prohibition itself.)

Did Mary seek by a touch to satisfy herself whether it was body, true body, and not mere spirit, that she saw and recognized as her risen Lord? And did Jesus graciously refuse her this tactual proof in order that she might, to her own profit, exercise faith of a higher degree, believing simply his words? Was it as if he had said: 'You need not touch me, to know what you wish to know. Believe me that I am not yet withdrawn bodily from the world of sense. I am with you still for a season in the bodily form which you behold. But for a season only. Go therefore unto my brethren [the ineffable affectionate condescension of that word!] and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God?' They needed to know this, in order that they might miss no opportunity of fellowship with him while he yet remained bodily present on earth. That message to the Saviour's "brethren" through Mary would tend to make them obedient to his own personal instruction given before his crucifixion, requiring them to repair to Galilee for the purpose of meeting him there when he should have risen from the dead. Even so, those disciples were almost unaccountably dilatory in going to Galilee as bidden.

XXXIX

EMMAUS

NOT quite, if almost, unaccountably dilatory, those disciples about going to meet their Master in Galilee. Their fault was not disobedience, except as unbelief is disobedience. It was pure unbelief—natural unbelief, we may say and insist. They could not, and so they did not, yet believe that their Lord had indeed risen from the dead. They hung in doubt—to our profit, who still need all the evidence which as a result of those first disciples' dull unbelief was then gathered, to assure us of so incredible a fact, as that one actually dead had, and this through no agency visible or audible, become actually living again.

Jesus condescended to his disciples' need, and before the meeting designed by him with them in Galilee, made several convincing disclosures of himself to them in and about Jerusalem. Perhaps we do not possess accounts of all the Judean self-disclosures that Jesus thus graciously vouchsafed. Indeed we almost certainly do not. For when Luke says, in the first chapter of the Acts, "Appearing unto them by the space of forty days," his language seems plainly to imply somewhat numerous occasions of his revelation of himself. Some of these, not specifically mentioned, probably had their scene in Jerusalem, or near that city. Of the nine or ten recorded occasions, six or seven certainly were in or near Jerusalem.

The first epiphany was that already described, the one to Mary Magdalene at the sepulcher on the morning of the resurrection. The second was to the women who had accompanied Mary Magdalene in her early visit

to the tomb. When they were returning to Jerusalem, Jesus met them, and said, "All hail!" They thereupon drew near, and "took hold of his feet, and worshipped him." Those women Jesus did not deter from this contact with his person. Why he did not, it is much easier to understand, than it is to understand why in Mary Magdalene's case he did. Jesus gave those women a message. First reassuring them with a gentle "Fear not," "Go," he said, "tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me." Though, before his crucifixion, he had given his disciples this direction to serve in guidance of their behavior after he should rise from the dead, their slowness of heart to believe rendered that earlier direction from him insufficient. The risen Jesus now had only, with his own lips, repeated to the women what the angel had just before told them at the sepulcher. The women faithfully delivered the message thus doubly entrusted to them. The "brethren" who received the message Luke speaks of as "the apostles." And "the apostles," those chosen and beloved of their Lord, those to whom he, ceasing to call them "servants," had a little while before given the affectionate title, "friends," those whom now that triumphant Conqueror of death glorifies with the yet more intimate title, "brethren"—how did the "apostles" receive the report of those women and the message from the Master given them both by angels and by himself?

Luke tells us how: "And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them." John, too, that disciple whom Jesus loved? Luke makes no exception when he says "the apostles." What was it then that John "believed," when he with Peter visited and explored the vacant sepulcher? Only that the sepulcher was indeed vacant, as Mary Magdalene had told them? She herself, when she told the two apostles that, had not yet believed that Jesus had risen. Her report

to them was, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb." Was this, this only, what John believed? Then he had made no advance beyond Peter in faith; for so much Peter too must needs have believed, and he perhaps was before John in believing that.

The question thus raised about John's attitude of mind is one exceedingly difficult to answer. No note occurs anywhere else in the narratives of the Gospels tending to distinguish John from his fellow apostles as more ready than they to believe that Jesus was risen. But there is John's own record concerning himself, "and he saw and believed." Luke, then, in saying "the apostles," and making no exception, did he use language true only of the apostles in general, not taking needless pains to be nicely exact in a detail not vital to the general just impression which he wished to produce? Our proper reply undoubtedly must be, It is not now at all important that we should know exactly how it was.

The first unbelief of the disciples was, as has been said, inevitable, and, as has also been said, their risen Lord condescended to it, knowing their frame and remembering that they were dust. In the exercise of this divine condescension, Jesus bore with his disciples delaying so long to obey that word of his which bade them repair to Galilee for the purpose of meeting him there and receiving there his farewell instructions. He apparently waited himself in Jerusalem, or near, while they waited there, and overcame their unbelief by showing himself alive to them after his passion. (By the way, the direction from Jesus requiring his disciples to return to Galilee in order to meet there their risen Lord, is a trait in the narrative not likely to have had a mythical origin. That Jesus should be represented as having chosen to vouchsafe his first appearances after his resurrection to women, is another trait in the Gospel narrative not likely to have had an origin in myth.)

The two epiphanies thus far noticed occurred early in the morning of the day of the resurrection. That same day, in the afternoon, a third epiphany occurred. The narrative of it is a lovely idyll, furnished to us by the Evangelist Luke. It seems that two of the disciples (not "apostles") were going from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus, some seven or eight miles distant from the city. There could be but one subject to engage their thought and their conversation on the way. They were thinking and talking of the violent and cruel death of their Lord, and of the strange, incredible rumors affirming his actual resurrection from the dead. The tone of their communication with each other was unbelieving, therefore melancholy, and the melancholy of their hearts depicted itself on their countenances. So it would seem, for a stranger who drew near and joined them in their walk, apparently remarked it, since he asked them, "What communications are these that you have one with another as ye walk?"

The interruption of that question brought them to a moment's halt in the way. Now at any rate their countenances wore an expression of melancholy. "They stood still, looking sad," Luke graphically says. One of the two, his name is handed down to us, it was Cleopas, recovered speech and answered. He answered with a question asked in return. It was a question betokening surprise on his part that such a question as that of this stranger needed to be asked. What topic but one could be occupying their minds? 'Canst thou then,' Cleopas said, 'though perhaps only a stranger in Jerusalem, be unaware of the things that have taken place there in these days?' "What things?" asked the stranger. And they then told of Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet they called him, mighty in word and in work; of how he had been delivered up and been crucified; and of how they had hoped that he was the one to bring redemption to Israel. 'This is the third day,' they

added, 'since his crucifixion, and to-day, amazing to tell, certain women of our company would have us believe that this Jesus is not dead but alive. We went to his tomb, say they, and found it empty of his body, but we saw there a vision of angels who assured us that he was risen from the dead. Some men of our number,' Cleopas goes on to relate, 'thereupon went to the sepulcher and found it was indeed so as the women had said; but Jesus himself, alas, they did not see.'

The story was told, and now the stranger speaks. He spoke in a tone of superior rebuke which might even seem severe but that no doubt he qualified it with an affectionate gentleness in his manner of speaking. 'Oh, foolish ones,' he said, 'and slow of heart to believe! And this, after all that the prophets have spoken! Did it not,' he asked them, 'did it not behoove the Christ first to suffer such things, and then to live again, to live a life of glory?' With that, this mysterious stranger entered upon a strain of discourse that set the hearts of those disciples aglow with wonder and with joy. The ancient Scriptures took on to them new meaning as they listened. Why had they never divined this before? For the unknown companion of their walk, beginning with the books of Moses, and thence pursuing his theme through all the books of the prophets, and in fine through the whole cycle of the Scriptures, made them luminous with Messianic allusion (which, when presently his hearers found out who he was, they perceived meant "things concerning himself").

The walk, we may well believe, was with such discourse made leisurely and slow, but they now at length were near Emmaus, the village of the two disciples' destination, probably their place of residence. They about to end here their walk, the stranger set his face forward as if to go farther. But the disciples would not have it so. 'Stay thou with us,' they hospitably said, 'it is evening, and the day is far spent.' He yielded,

and they made him their guest. Some in past ages entertained angels unawares, but who before had unawares entertained one worshiped by the angel God? When they sat down to supper, their several were all at once exchanged, those disciples' and stranger's. He became the host, and they were the guest. For he took the loaf, and blessed it, and gave of it to them.

Those disciples' eyes had, up to this point, been hidden but now they knew the stranger. It was their "And he vanished out of their sight!"

The object of their journey to Emmaus, whatever it was, forgotten, the two disciples, with not a moment's delay, go back to Jerusalem. Although the day "far spent" enough for them to enforce upon the stranger their hospitable urgency that he should stay with them for the night, it was not far spent enough to keep them from at once taking the walk, not precisely with slack steps now, back to Jerusalem. They walked as they walked, but no longer with sadness. They spoke to each other, 'Did we not feel our hearts burning within us all the time while he was speaking to us on the way, while he was opening to us the things seen in the Scriptures?' Arrived in the city, they found the eleven gathered together, and with them other disciples excitedly saying one to another, "The Lord is risen indeed!" And thereto adding now something new and startling, "And he has appeared to Simon."

The women had been charged by the angel with a message addressed not only to the disciples in general but also in particular to Peter, expressly named. In this circumstance it is Mark that relates, and Peter is understood to have been main source to Mark for his Gospel. There is a touch of human nature in Peter's wish to have record entered of that message sent to him in his name, as too a touch of angelic, of divine, consideration in the very thought itself of such a message to Peter.

And now it seems Jesus had added the grace of an individual appearance to that apostle. It was as if his considerate Lord purposed to make it thus fully understood by him, and by his brethren as well, that his fall, suffered that night before the crucifixion, grievous though it was, had not lost him his place in the loving regard of the common Master of them all. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthian church, makes specific mention of this appearance of Jesus to Peter, calling that apostle there by his Hebrew [Chaldaic or Aramaic] name, Cephas. We have thus found four epiphanies occurring on the day of the resurrection. And a fifth, not less striking than any other, was nigh at hand.

Those two disciples, returned from Emmaus, contributed to the wondering and joyous excitement, perhaps we should not go wrong to say, bewilderment, of the occasion, by rehearsing to the company they had joined their own afternoon's experience. 'We first knew that it was he,' they said, 'when he was breaking the bread.' Very noteworthy this is, and let us not miss its lesson. The Lord took the bread and blessed it. As has elsewhere previously been pointed out in these pages, the giving of thanks (or the pronouncing of blessing) was a marked observance of the living Jesus recorded as occurring on the bestowment by him, or the partaking, of food. Jesus alive from the dead did not omit this exemplary act of piety; and with it, on the present occasion, he vouchsafed a memorable sanction of the practice—memorable forever thenceforth no doubt to those two disciples, who now made special mention of it in recounting what had befallen them at Emmaus. There is so much suggestive implication everywhere throughout the narratives of the Bible, especially in those of the Gospels, that we are in danger of losing something precious unless we pay vigilant heed to every word in them, every phrase, and even it may be in some instances the turn of a phrase.

XL

“PEACE BE UNTO YOU!”

AS has already been intimated, still another, a most beautiful, most striking, most instructive, appearance of the risen Jesus was now imminent. Let us, however, before narrating this new appearance, dwell a little longer on the appearance just narrated of Jesus, that to the two disciples making their way to a village forever known to fame only because those two men, but one of whom is so much as named, and he casually, walked thither that day. That appearance, besides the ineffable idyllic charm of it, both in itself and in the form of the narrative by Luke, possesses a quite peculiar, perhaps hitherto unsuspected, value of its own, an evidential, an apologetic, value bearing on the great fact of the resurrection of Jesus.

Let me trust that no reader of mine will resent or regret an occasional argumentative interruption of narrative, such as has been several times already encountered by him in these pages concerning the resurrection of Christ. Let us all remind ourselves that the epiphanies (a name often given to the post-resurrection appearances of the risen Redeemer)—let us all remind ourselves that these epiphanies were vouchsafed by our Lord in order to confirm the faith of the disciples in a fact which they were so “slow to believe,” the fact that his resurrection had really occurred. That evidential value of the epiphanies was not exhausted in exerting its effect upon the early disciples. It is available and it should be made use of, generation after generation, as long as there is reluctance remaining in the human breast to believe in an event so extraordinary as a resurrection from the

dead. The epiphanies admit of being convincingly employed to meet the most modern fashion of critical skepticism on this vital point. The psychical, or psychophysical, way of “interpreting” the New Testament resurrection narratives will not bear the test of being applied to some at least by eminence among the epiphanies recorded. These would almost seem to have been, of prescient purpose, divinely ordered to be such that ingenious “modern” skepticism could not find any even plausible way of “interpreting” them, according to the favorite critical fashion of the day, so as at once in form to accept the record for true and in effect to dismiss it for false.

Take for example what occurred in the reported experience of those two disciples, during their walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus. That incident either did, or did not, occur. If it did occur, all is plain, and the fact of the resurrection is by that incident, that incident taken by itself alone, securely established. If it did not occur, it is either a pure fabrication, or a fabrication founded upon something that did occur. Who fabricated the incident? When was it fabricated? It is an incident which, when all its features are duly taken account of, is one not in the least likely to have been fabricated, either out of nothing, or out of something, by anybody, at any time. Here at least is a case in which the hypothesis of hallucination due to a disqualifying excited state of feeling in the persons immediately concerned in the incident (who must of course have been the original narrators of the story), is absolutely excluded. They did not imagine what they experienced. That they did imagine it, is a thing simply unthinkable.

Consider. They were joined in their walk by an unrecognized mere stranger. They talked with this stranger and listened to his talk a considerable time, perhaps hours, with not the slightest suspicion that there was anything supernatural, or even anything very extraor-

dinary, in what was happening to them. They offered this stranger hospitality, entirely as if he were simply a man like themselves. They did not know him, they did not dream of knowing him—until a certain point in their apparently casual association with him was reached, and then—he mysteriously disappeared. Now if it was not Jesus that thus appeared, thus departed himself, and thus disappeared, who was it? Nobody? It is against human nature, it violates psychology, it is impossible, that hallucination accounts for all this. Something real must have occurred to those disciples in their walk. You cannot construe this particular story in consistency with any possible theory of honest self-deception on the part of the actors in it. Granted that to account for one or two of the other epiphanies there is some conceivable possibility of introducing the idea of hallucination, there is no such possibility here. You must resort to conscious *fraud* in somebody to account for the Emmaus story, if it is not a true story. And fraud, to produce just such a story—it is a thought that the sane human mind refuses to think, a thought the proposal of which it meets with irrepressible instinctive rejection. The mere existence of this story, *this* story, is proof that the story is true; and if the story is true, then the resurrection of Jesus was a fact.

The disciples in general seem to have been that evening in a state of perhaps needless perturbation in view of danger to be apprehended from the hostility of the Jews. John notes it that they sat with closed doors on this account. At the very moment at which, thus situated they were mutually hearing and telling of these strange reported occurrences, an occurrence still more strange befell. Nervously ready to be frightened, they were frightened indeed. It was not a noisy attack from the Jews that terrified them. Quite otherwise, it was a startlingly noiseless occurrence. There was no opening of a door,

nothing, even noiseless, that could be called an entrance, but suddenly there stood in the midst of these disciples an unexpected, unannounced, accession to their company, a personage who said serenely, “Peace be with you!” It was a customary form of salutation, but it did not compose the agitated minds of those disciples. In their terror, they conceived that they beheld a spirit, and in their terror they forgot that a ghost could not be supposed to speak with an audible voice.

But Jesus—it could be no other than he—soothed their fears with further words. “See my hands and my feet,” said he, “that it is I myself. Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me having.” Therewith he showed them his hands and his feet. They bore the marks of the nails! For very wonder and joy, those disciples were still unable to believe. It was too marvelous, too glorious, to be true. It is not written that the disciples, any of them (even intrepid Peter) availed themselves of the privilege offered in the Lord’s invitation, and ventured to “handle” his person. But he had another resource for reassuring them, or rather for assuring them, for they seem to have been by this time reassured. “Have ye here,” he asked, “anything to eat?” A naturally suggested question, for, as Matthew tells us, the company had been sitting at meat. A piece of a broiled fish was given him (with perhaps also a honey-comb), and he took it and ate it before them.

A paradox! Incorporeal enough to elude conditions of matter, to find housewalls and closed doors no obstruction to locomotion, and yet at the same time corporeal enough to speak with an audible voice, to admit of being “handled,” to partake of ordinary human food in the ordinary human way. Such was Jesus risen from the dead. A contradiction, an impossibility? To our human perceptions, to our human conceptions, yes.

But who knows what matter is? Who, what is spirit? To be unbelieving here is the part not of science, but

of nescience; not of wisdom, but of a foolish false conceit of wisdom. It is making a mistake like that of those Jews to whom the incarnate Jesus said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Withholding belief here, we should err, not knowing the secrets of the universe, nor the power of God.

The incarnation of God involves, necessarily involves, all such mysteries, paradoxes, contradictions, impossibilities. Rather ought we to say, With God there are no impossibilities—except moral impossibilities, and such are impossibilities named so only in a figurative sense. The resurrection life of Jesus did not truly violate any of the fixed conditions of the world of sense. It simply transcended them. It did this easily, and as it were naturally, because the Lord was in himself a transcendent Being—an incomprehensible Being of course, because inscrutably at once human and divine. He could do what he would in a universe that he had made—in it, and with it. In the presence of such mystery, there is nothing else for us so profoundly wise as to be humble, to believe, and to adore.

XLI

“HE BREATHED ON THEM”

WITH all simplicity, and with a moderation, a frugality, of statement that rather surprises, while it reassures, John says, “The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord.” They were at length convinced, then, that they really saw the Lord, and, in the gladness that succeeded to terror in their hearts, they were prepared to hear him, hear him now with other ears, repeat his “Peace be with you,” and add, “As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” Having uttered these words, he performed a beautifully simple, solemn, symbolic act, which he interpreted. He breathed on those disciples, saying to them: “Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them: whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

There is no disguising to ourselves the fact that here is something which, superficially regarded, is well adapted to perplex our understanding, to stagger our belief. Those obscure and humble men, uncultivated, undisciplined alike in mind and in heart—such men—invested with the awful power and responsibility of forgiving sin, or finally and irreversibly withholding forgiveness of sin! What does it mean? What can it mean? Before trying to determine what, we must say to ourselves, Whatever it means, it is to be accepted, acquiesced in, by us. That is the attitude of spirit in which alone we can hope to penetrate to the truth and secret of the Saviour’s meaning in those tremendous words of his.

In the first place, two things bearing on the problem here involved are to be heedfully considered. One is, that the words were spoken to "disciples," John's word; Luke says, "the eleven," "*and* them that were with them." The commission, therefore, whatever it may be found to mean, was not an exclusively, not even a peculiarly, apostolic commission. Apparently at least the rank and file of the disciples were invested with the power conferred by it. The other thing to be noted and to be borne in mind is, that the New Testament, whether in its history or in its teaching, supplies no intimation that the power now in question was ever exercised by those to whom it was given, in any other way than the way—a way not immediately obvious on the face of Christ's language—which is here presently to be pointed out. Nowhere throughout the whole New Testament can there be found even so much as one least hint, expressed or implied, that the power of forgiveness here bestowed was, either formally or virtually, ever once put in exercise by any disciple, or by any apostle, of Jesus, in a manner as if it was meant by the Giver to be, and was understood by the recipients to be, a kind of magic spiritual endowment, clothing its possessor with a dreadful prerogative of domination, for eternal good or ill, over the conscience and over the destiny of his fellow man.

The two considerations thus submitted encourage us, if they do not compel us, to seek some other, some larger, meaning in these words of the Saviour, than the one most obvious on the surface of the saying. We feel that a power or privilege of absolution, as "absolution," so-called, is practised in a certain great communion by a privileged priestly order of men, could not have been in the purpose, or even in the thought, of our Lord. But if, on the contrary, it *was* in the Lord's purpose or thought, still, such absolving power, as has already been said, seems to have been entrusted promiscuously and indiscriminately, to the whole body of the disciples

present on that momentous occasion, and not to a selected official few of the number, much less exclusively to any one particular person among them distinguished from the rest.

What then was that other, larger, meaning wrapped up in these words of the Lord, the elusive object of our present studious, reverent quest? Let us “ walk softly ” in the course of our seeking now. Is it not true that, according to Scripture, forgiveness, or remission of sins, was to be proclaimed everywhere through Jesus the Christ? Did not the risen Jesus himself say with human lips that remission of sins should be preached in the name of the Christ unto all nations? And, as a matter of indisputable history, has not this been going on in the world some nineteen centuries since? And was not the process begun with those very disciples to whom Jesus addressed the words we are considering? And was not all the great, the still-to-be unfolded, future divinely made dependent on the fidelity of those first disciples in fulfilling their mission? Is it not true therefore that Jesus, in those words of his, committed in effect to that little company of his disciples the solemn responsibility of a world-wide proclamation such in character that, according as men received it or rejected it, their sins should be by God graciously forgiven to them, or their sins should be by themselves wilfully retained? And is not this the deeper, wider, greater meaning which we set out to seek, hidden in those words of Christ? We of course are at liberty to suppose, and indeed we cannot doubt, that, having thus in brief impressed his disciples with a sense of their transcendent vocation in the world, he afterward, during those forty days of his lingering in his resurrection life upon the earth, unfolded to them in sufficient detail for their understanding, many things that in their most condensed forms of statement offer problems difficult for us to solve.

Two other considerations, additional to the two already presented, look strongly in favor of that more profound, more comprehensive, meaning of the Saviour's words which has just been propounded. Of these two further considerations, the first is, that obviously the power of forgiveness bestowed was not a power to be exercised by the disciples mutually among themselves, one disciple forgiving another from time to time as occasion might arise. The gift was manifestly a collective gift conferred upon all the disciples taken together in a body—although necessarily a gift to be used by them distributively, individually. It had respect therefore to persons outside of their company, that is, to the world of men in general, the "all nations," to whom the gospel of forgiveness through Christ was to be preached. This is so evident, that it may be said to be self-evident. Almost equally evident it is, that the forgiveness to be experienced was a forgiveness, not of sins that might from time to time be committed, a forgiveness therefore to be repeatedly experienced on repeated occasions of need, throughout the life of the sinner, but a forgiveness bestowed and experienced once for all at the moment of the sinner's first obedience to the gospel, rendered through personal faith in Christ.

The second of the two additional considerations is still more important. A thing to be noted as full of instructive significance, is the fact that the power of forgiveness is bestowed by the Saviour on his disciples in immediate connection with his impartation to them of the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is as if he had said, and perhaps he in effect did say, to them: 'Remember what I told you the night before I suffered. I promised you then that I would send to you the Holy Spirit; and I taught you that he would convince the world of the truth respecting sin, the truth that not to believe on me is the sin indeed. This convincing of the world the Holy Spirit will do

through you; to you accordingly I impart the Holy Spirit. Go, full of the Holy Spirit, and preach to men the truth respecting sin, and therewith the truth that there is forgiveness for sin through believing on me. It is an embassy from me to the world for you to discharge, as I have discharged the embassy given me by the Father. It has in it issues of life and of death to those who hear you. Their sins will be forgiven who obey; the disobedient will choose otherwise, and their sins will be retained. This is your momentous responsibility. The salvation of the world depends on your fidelity. Remember that salvation for men is to be secured only through forgiveness of their sins; that forgiveness of men's sins is to be secured only through their believing on me; that men's believing on me is to be secured only through the Holy Spirit's convincing them of the sin of not believing on me; that it is the Holy Spirit in you working through you that must accomplish this result. Be conscious of your responsibility. Preach the gospel of forgiveness through me; preach it, remembering that whosoever sins ye thus forgive are indeed forgiven, that whosoever sins fail to be thus forgiven are retained.'

It was then an obligation, a responsibility, imposed, that power of forgiveness—this, rather than a privilege, a prerogative, conferred. Wherever, since that ever-to-be-remembered night of nineteen centuries ago, the gospel of forgiveness through Jesus Christ has been preached to men, *there* has been borne a witness that those first disciples were not unfaithful to the solemn trust thus received by them from their risen Lord.

For confirmation of the view that has thus been presented as to the true meaning of these solemn words of the Saviour—a view arrived at through independent study of the words themselves—two places of Scripture may be compared. Luke (24 : 44-49) uses different

language to report the risen Lord's commission to his disciples, giving it, as not improbably the Lord himself gave it, a virtually equivalent alternative form of expression, thus: "It is written that the Christ should suffer and the third day rise again; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations." So the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, using the keys given him to open the kingdom of heaven, exhorted his hearers, they desiring to know from him what they should do (Acts 2 : 38), "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins." In that exhortation, he was fulfilling his Master's desire, through the exercise intended by that Master of his power to bestow forgiveness of sins.

XLII

“MY LORD AND MY GOD!”

IT so happened—if anything relating to such events can properly be said to ‘*happen*’!—that one of the eleven apostles was absent from the company of his brethren that night, when Jesus thus appeared. This was Thomas, otherwise called Didymus. His fellow disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But Thomas doubted. Well for us that he did—well at least for the doubting Thomases among us. There was, it thus appears, one good case among those disciples of a man resolved not to be deluded, however might be many of his fellows. We can imagine him scrupling shrewdly, and asking, ‘Did you avail yourselves of the privilege that you think was offered you of handling his person? As for me, I must see in his hands the print of the nails, yea, I must put my finger into the print of the nails, more yet, I must put my hand into his side, or I will not believe.’

Stout skeptic, Thomas! But let us not judge him harshly. That was the way in which he was constituted, the type of man that he was. Let us recall in his favor that Thomas was the one who, when it was thought among the disciples that Jesus was endangering his own life by going, as he proposed to do, into Judea for the purpose of his visit to the grave of Lazarus—that Thomas was the one who then said, “Let us also go that we may die with him.” There spoke a devoted disciple, and Thomas’s present doubt does not make void his present devotion.

Strange, yet not altogether strange—those disciples, after that appearance of Jesus, still lingered in Jerusalem,

instead of going, as they had been bidden, to Galilee. It was just a week after; the disciples were gathered together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors of the room were shut as before, and again, as before, Jesus stood in the midst of the company, and saluted them all with his "Peace be unto you!" Then he singled out Thomas and startled him with, "Reach hither thy finger and see my hands, and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing."

It must have been a moment of exquisite pleasure and pain to Thomas. His overpowering emotion forced from him a passionate cry of uttermost sudden faith, mounting into adoring deific recognition. "My Lord and my God!" he exclaimed. It is not to be imagined that he accepted the offer of Jesus and even so much as touched the sacred person of his Lord. The words that Jesus further spoke to him imply that seeing only had satisfied Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!" That benediction we, writer and reader alike of these pages, may devoutly and gratefully share! Let it be remarked that Jesus, by impressive silence and reserve, accepted the deifying ascription of Thomas. We now believe the truth implied in Thomas's words, not because he uttered them, but because Christ, by not denying, affirmed them.

Recalling what Jesus said to Peter when Peter made his noble confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven"; recalling also Paul's declaration, "No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit"—recalling these two things, may we not reverently assume that Thomas was, at that great moment in his life, subject of a special access of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in his heart, enabling and compelling him, as it were beyond himself,

to his eloquent outburst of recognition and adoration, “ My Lord and my God ! ” True, Thomas was not with his brother apostles when Christ breathed on them that symbolic breath and imparted to them the Holy Spirit ; but it is not to be supposed that Thomas’s absence—how occasioned we know not, perhaps providentially occasioned in order that we might have his testimony, both the negative unbelieving and the positive adoring—it is not to be supposed that his absence on that occasion prevented his partnership with his fellow apostles in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Of an appearance to James (probably the James known as “ brother of the Lord ”) we learn only from mere mention, without circumstance, occurring in the enumeration given us by Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthian church, of the witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. The same is true of the separate appearances to Peter—except indeed that Luke incidentally relates that those two Emmaus pedestrians found the disciples saying one to another, “ The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon ! ” Similarly without note of time or of place, are two appearances, mentioned by Paul in that same enumeration of his, one to “ above five hundred brethren at once,” and one “ to all the apostles.” “ Last of all,” the great heart adds, characteristically and pathetically, “ he appeared to me also . . . who am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

XLIII

“LOVEST THOU ME?”

JOHN the Evangelist, in yet another inimitable narration of his, having much the effect and the charm of a poetic pastoral, relates an appearance such in its scene and its incidents that one might almost believe it to have been intended by the Lord to constitute an acted idyll of more than earthly power to affect the imagination and the heart. This appearance John locates; it was at the “sea of Tiberias” in Galilee.

Some at least then of the disciples had now come to Galilee from Jerusalem. “There were together,” John says, “Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.” On this occasion of those disciples’ finding themselves together, Peter, in accordance with his character, was the one to take the initiative in action of some sort. ‘I am going a fishing,’ he said. ‘We will come along with you,’ his companions promptly responded. It was a night venture in their customary occupation, so it seems, in which they were now embarked. They met with no success. The fish swam shy of their nets; they took nothing.

But as day broke, after their tedious and fruitless all-night toil, they descried a figure standing on the beach—the figure of an unknown man, who spoke to them in a kindly, neighborly way, and said, “Children, have you anything to eat?” They appear not to have felt anything surprising in such a question put in such a form. The word of address, “Children,” was probably taken by them to have been spoken in a tone partly of friendly familiarity, and partly of condescending superiority, as

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by an early-risen householder of the vicinage come down to the lakeside for the purpose of buying some fish for his breakfast. The turn of the original Greek warrants us in giving the stranger's question a certain free, colloquial effect, somewhat as if he had said, 'Boys, I do not suppose you have anything there in the way of food that would do for my breakfast?' They simply answered, No. 'Try casting your net on the right side of the boat,' the stranger said, and added, 'you will find a haul there.' They, as it were automatically, obeyed, and the catch proved so great that they were unable to draw the net.

"It is the Lord!" said John to Peter. For Peter, that was hint enough to act upon, and he acted at once, in a characteristic manner. He incontinently flung himself into the lake, in his impetuous eagerness to come swimming to the Master. The rest followed in the boat, towing landward the net full of fishes. They had not far to row (or possibly to pole), about a hundred yards. When all reached the shore, a hospitable sight greeted their eyes. A charcoal fire was glowing there, and on it a fish was broiling. There was also bread.

Jesus said, "Bring of the fish which ye have now taken." Peter promptly acted again. Whether because his clothes were already wet, and he could therefore, with less trouble than it would cost his fellow fishermen, wade down into the water if necessary to get a better hold of the net, or for some other reason, he went, and, for aught hinted in the narrative, with his single unassisted strength, drew the net to land—a thing more easily done from firm standing-ground on the shore than from the boat unsteady on the water. The fishes were large, and there were upwards of one hundred and fifty of them, and yet the net held them, not a mesh breaking.

Jesus, as at Emmaus, is the host. "Come," he says cheerfully, "break your fast." "Who art thou?" no one of those disciples ventured to ask, although ap-

parently they all in their astonishment wished to; awe kept them silent, for in their hearts they full well knew that it was the Lord. Jesus joins that awestruck company at their meal, and distributes to them the food. It is to be supposed, but it is not said, that he partook of it with them. The Evangelist reckons this as Christ's "third" appearance "to the disciples." The two appearances preceding, which make this the third, had been the two on successive Sunday evenings, on occasion of the second of which Thomas was convinced. The present, third, appearance was perhaps the first that occurred in Galilee, whither, it may be assumed, the disciples had repaired without further delay, now that Thomas was ready to go with them. "To the disciples," is a phrase to be noted in John's account. The historian leaves out of his reckoning those appearances which were not "to the disciples," but to individuals.

(Some commentators find an acted allegory in the incidents of this appearance of Jesus. John himself does not hint such a meaning; but it is indeed possible that the disciples were to understand a fishing for men imported here, to be conducted by them under the direction of their Lord.)

There was to be a sequel to that morning meal by the lakeside, such as nobody could have forecast, least of all perhaps Peter, the one most intimately concerned in it. He had just exhibited his personal devotion to Jesus by that precipitate plunge of his into the water to come to his Master on the shore. Perhaps if he could have recognized the hidden truth of the feeling in his own heart, he would have been obliged to confess to himself that, in his own self-complacent comparative judgment, he, Peter, really loved the Lord the best of them all; "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended," was, not long before, the spontaneous irrepressible outburst of a feeling like this in his heart.

But now Jesus, the meal being ended (it may have passed solemnly in silence), turned to this impulsive disciple and true loyal lover of his, and addressed him in a manner profoundly impressive, calling him, not ‘Peter,’ and not ‘Simon Peter,’ but more formally, as it were distantly, “Simon, son of John”—in preface to his question, “Lovest thou me more than these?” That question went, it may well be believed, shrewdly to the quick of Peter’s present state of mind and heart. The expression, “more than these?”—as in the English so in the Greek—might, grammatically considered, mean, “More than these tools and fruits of your occupation as fisherman?” But that meaning the high seriousness of the challenge to Peter sets aside. ‘More than these, thy brethren,’ is doubtless the meaning. Peter does not dare reply, Yes, and stop with that affirmative monosyllable; and so neither will he simply say, No. Leaving off the clause of comparison, he answers, “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” It was a firm reply, and it could not have been firm, if it had not been true; for it appealed to Christ’s own knowledge of the real fact as it existed. Christ responded with a command. Perhaps that form of response to the apostle’s firm avowal of his love, recalled to Peter his Master’s recent saying, “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”

Jesus with a command puts Peter’s protestation of affection to the test—the supreme, the crucial, the only, test—the test of obedience. “Feed my lambs,” he briefly, densely, said. He then repeated his question, in the same form, except that he did not now add, “more than these.” In both his first and his second asking of the question, Jesus (according to John, who, whatever the tongue spoken by his Lord, at any rate reports him, here as everywhere, in Greek) used a certain Greek word for “love” which Peter exchanged for a different word in replying. Jesus repeats his question to Peter, representing

“love” by the same word as before. Peter repeats his reply, still using his different word for “love.” When Jesus asked his question the third time, he asked it with use of Peter’s word. This conforming, on the Master’s part, to his disciple’s choice of word, and no less his conforming to his disciple’s omission of the clause, “more than these,” may be understood as a gracious, divine, reassuring complaisance toward the broken and humiliated man.

Peter’s word for “love,” three times used by him, makes a more modest claim of affection than would have made his Master’s word, had the disciple used that in his avowal of affection. Still it affirms trustworthy true loyalty. Peter, in using it, exhibited a fine firmness, in perfect confidence that his sentiment toward his Lord was at least worthy of the word he used to describe it. Jesus in at last adopting it from Peter seemed to recognize and admit his disciple’s claim.

To Peter’s second protestation Jesus rejoins to the same effect as at first, but with different words, “Tend my sheep.” When, after that rejoinder, Jesus asked his searching question yet a third time, Peter, and no wonder, was grieved. Doubtless he felt to his heart’s core the implicit reminder thus conveyed of his late threefold denial of his Lord. But not even that could shake the constancy of his confidence in the genuineness of his love, and, with passionate appeal to his Master’s omniscience, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee!” he resolutely exclaimed. Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

This ordeal for Peter was not all pure ordeal, and nothing more. It was also virtual solemn reinstalment, openly made, of the late fallen disciple in his apostolic office.

There followed, apparently without pause to make a break of continuity in the Saviour’s communication to Peter, a foreshadowing of future for him well fitted to

make him still further serious, not to say sad. With those words, frequent on the Lord's lips, and indescribably impressive from him, “Verily, verily,” to preface his announcement of what awaited his faithful disciple, Jesus went on to say to Peter: “I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.”

John interprets the saying: “Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God.” The tradition is, a credible tradition, that Peter was crucified; “Head downward!” (not to presume on too much likeness in fate to his Lord), it is said was Peter's demand from those who put him to death.

Immediately upon such somber foreshadowing to Peter of the earthly end that awaited him, Jesus said, “Follow me.” It was as if he had said more at large: ‘I have put thee in full foreknowledge of what is involved for thee in the love thou professest for thy Master. Thy love-prompted obedience will lead thee to such a final goal. Still, in the face of all, love thou me with the love which is obedience. Follow me even to the utter end. For me the end, thou knowest, was the cross.’

By this time, or before, that company of outdoor breakfasters on the shore of the lake was perhaps broken up into groups walking somewhither—Jesus with Peter at his side. Peter, “turning about,” sees John just behind them following. He was prompted to a question—overbold therein, as it was the weakness of Peter's strength to make him be. “This man, what of him?” he asked, pointing out John. “If I will that he tarry till I come,” Jesus repressively replied, “what is that to thee? Follow *thou* me.” The pronoun, “thou,” not introduced before, is significant. It emphasizes the individual personal responsibility laid upon Peter to be

simply obedient himself, without regard to either duty or privilege belonging to another.

A tradition, taking its rise from the Saviour's present saying to Peter about John, became current among John's fellow disciples to the effect that he was not to die. But John in his Gospel takes pains to point out that the tradition was not warranted by what Jesus actually said.

XLIV

“ TO ABOVE FIVE HUNDRED BRETHREN AT ONCE ”

AS to that very important manifestation of himself which Jesus made to an assemblage of disciples numbering more than five hundred souls, definite information, beyond the bare fact thus stated that it occurred, is absolutely wanting. We are not told when it occurred, or where, or what were the circumstances attending it, or what communication was made on the august occasion by the risen Lord to his disciples. We reason that the assembling of such a number of disciples could not have been merely casual, that there must have been previous concert of action, no doubt under the direction of Christ. The probabilities all clearly lie in favor of Galilee as the scene of this great epiphany. Indeed, even in the absence of explicit information on the point, it seems inferentially almost certain that this assembling of “above five hundred brethren” occurred on the “mountain” in Galilee which Jesus indicated as the place at which he would meet his disciples. Perhaps it was the mountain of the “Sermon on the Mount”; and here probably what is called by eminence “The Great Commission” was given, not to the apostles exclusively, but to a very considerable body of disciples. It is good to believe that all Christians, without discrimination, are commanded, authorized, empowered, by the Great Commission. It is interesting to note that Paul, mentioning this appearance of the Lord years after, remarks that most of those then and there present were still living to bear testimony to what they saw and heard; although some, he says, were “fallen asleep.”

It is Matthew, himself one of the "eleven disciples," who alone speaks of the "mountain" of Christ's appointment for his meeting with those favored few. If it were not that Matthew, supposably a first-hand witness of the highest class, speaks only of the "eleven disciples" as present on that "mountain" occasion, making no allusion whatever to any others as sharers of the meeting thus enjoyed with the Lord, least of all to a considerable assemblage of brethren, numbering above five hundred souls, we should have more confidence in our conjecture that here occurred that momentous epiphany. But there is no conclusive reason against our assuming that while Matthew's own interest was especially engaged with the small select inner company of whom he was one, there were in fact above five hundred brethren at hand, permitted to hear and to accept for themselves, with the apostles, the duty and privilege contained for them in the Great Commission: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

It is not probable that we possess an account, or even so much as particular mention, of all the appearances to men of the risen Lord Jesus. We know that appearances occurred from time to time during a period of forty days preceding the day of Pentecost. There are plain intimations, express declarations indeed, that in this interval of time copious instruction was given by Christ to his disciples, especially no doubt to his apostles. Nothing, we may be sure, remained undone that would tend to make the redemptive work of the Saviour the most truly effective and fruitful.

Something was left to the first disciples, as something

still is left to us, for the exercise of faith. Sufficient proof was provided, as sufficient proof is yet provided, to convince the willing in heart; and the unwilling in heart, it was not of the divine purpose, as it would not have been, would not now be, saving or useful, to convince. It is well, it is at once sobering and exalting, for us to call often to mind the fact that for ever and ever hereafter, the faculty of faith will have a great part to play in the final beatific vision of God. “Vision,” we say, but vision here is a figure of speech; necessarily so, for it is self-evidently impossible that finite creatures should ever otherwise than through faith behold the Infinite. But faith at its highest will be a full equivalent for sight. Perhaps faith will never, even in eternity, actually reach and touch its absolute highest, but will always *approach* it only, with the privilege and the joy of drawing nearer and nearer for ever.

It will of course have been observed that all these manifestations of himself the risen Jesus made to disciples of his; outside of this circle he made not one. Why, it may be asked, why, it often has been asked—this generally in the spirit of cavil and disbelief—why were the appearances of Christ after his resurrection thus strictly confined? Why did he not at once overwhelm his enemies, support his disciples, and convince the world, by a conspicuous open exhibition of himself raised from the dead to the great Jerusalem public?

A natural enough question; but, when asked in skepticism, a question asked without due consideration of what was demanded from him, by the necessary conditions of the case, for the fulfilment of his purpose as Redeemer and Lord of men. Doubtless he might have made such a striking public manifestation of himself; but so too he might, before his crucifixion, have displayed in such a manner his power and his glory as quite to have confounded his foes and triumphantly

to have escaped suffering that death of agony and shame on the cross. The latter course he did not take, and for the same reasons (with other reasons added) he did not take the former course. Neither course would have served his purpose in the world. His purpose in the world was to win willing obedience to himself as Son of God Most High, and not to compel reluctant and rebellious *inevitable* submission on the part of men that might hate while they cringed to him. The course that he did take, both before his crucifixion and after his resurrection, commends itself even to the human reason, when the human reason is wisely considerate, as the one only course adapted to effect the purpose that he had in view.

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the resurrection body of Jesus was such as to render him not immediately recognizable. If his disciples, who had been months and years in his company, in close neighborhood, not to say personal contact, with him, failed to know their Lord after his resurrection, how can it be supposed that the general public, who had seen him only on occasions, and mostly then at some remove, would have identified him, in his changed resurrection body, as unmistakably the late crucified Nazarene? True, he could miraculously have brought about this result. But that would have been directly contrary to the principle that had governed his life. He had never once used his supernatural power either to astonish or to convince the unbelieving. He constantly required faith on the part of those who applied to him for help, as a condition of his bestowing it. His way was, not to produce faith by giving help, but rather to grant help in answer to faith. "According to your faith be it unto you," was the formula of his beneficent activity.

There was deep reason for this. The life that he came to give to men was a transcendent life, it was a

life of faith. It would have been a hindrance, not a help, to this transcendent life, to supply too much support to faith through evidence addressed to the senses. “ Blessed,” the Saviour said to Thomas, “ are they that have not *seen* and yet have *believed*.” If Jesus had, after his resurrection, shown himself conspicuously to a numerous general public in a form immediately recognizable as that of Jesus of Nazareth, such a display might have been a nine days’ wonder, but it would have been no more than that. Besides, it would have tended to the defeat of one important object aimed at by him, which was to teach that his resurrection was not mere resuscitation, but a celestial glorious *change* of embodiment, after the pattern of which was to be the change undergone in their future resurrection by the bodies of the redeemed. It would be impossible to conceive a course of appearances for the risen Christ, better adapted than was the one actually pursued, to show believers that their Lord now was at once the same and not the same; and both these facts were of capital importance to be known.

Still further, it is to be considered how little likely the promiscuous public would have been really to believe even the evidence of their senses, against the inveterate set and habit of human nature in them to regard death, when death has once supervened, as the irreversible earthly end of all to the dead. The disciples themselves, with all their advantage for believing, and with their most ardent wishes running in that direction, were hardly convinced at last that their Lord had really risen from the dead. The general public, it may be considered certain, would have remained to the last victoriously unconvinced. They would have found their various ways of being wisely incredulous. ‘ It was hallucination, it was ocular illusion, it was magic, the victim of the cross had been taken down too early, he had not died; if he really rose again, where is he now? why do we not

continue to see him? why only the one appearance?' We know that the Jews had their way of accounting for the empty tomb. Christ's disciples had stolen the body while the guard of soldiers were sleeping. This account of the matter became the current creed of those who did not wish to have the story of the resurrection true. So easy is it for the human mind to satisfy itself with reasons for rejecting, when it is once fully fixed in will against accepting, the truth.

There would thus have resulted no increase whatever of evidence for us of after generations, in favor of the great fact of the resurrection of Jesus. Even if, against all probability, many had become believers in consequence of the hypothetical public appearance of the risen Jesus, nothing would thereby have been gained for the convincing of mankind. Those who thus became believers would have been merged in the general mass of disciples, and, along with them, would, by the very fact of being believers, have been discredited to the skeptical mind as witnesses; while the immense majority, remaining, as the immense majority certainly would have remained, unconvinced, would, by this their attitude of unbelief, stand out to history in apparent testimony against the glorious fact.

But would they thus stand out to history? For there would have been no record made of such an unavailing epiphany, except records made by believers; and of records made by believers of epiphanies we have, as the case stands, a sufficient number. The appearance to "above five hundred brethren at once" answers quite well enough the purpose of such a grand public epiphany as is demanded by inconsiderate skeptics.

There is one further consideration pertinent here, which perhaps ought not to be omitted. It is a consideration which by itself alone, were there no other to be adduced, is completely conclusive. Had the risen Jesus displayed

himself publicly, it would thereby have been made incumbent upon the authorities, Jewish and Roman alike, to apprehend him for final effective execution of sentence upon him, as a criminal who had been prematurely taken down alive from his cross. True, were he indeed the supernatural being that he claimed to be, and were he indeed proved to be such by an authentic rising from the dead, he would have been perfectly able (as, had he so chosen, he could have escaped the first crucifixion) to thwart the efforts made to subject him a second time to the cross. But this would simply have created one more extraordinary phenomenon, perfectly useless at best, for historical criticism to set aside as wild fabrication, fruit of superstitious myth-making run mad.

Full and wise candid attention to all the bearings of the case will serve only to bring out more and more clearly the absolute divine wisdom of precisely that ordering of all things which actually took place. The completeness, the exquisite adaptedness, the all-sufficing effectiveness, of the means employed to make the resurrection of Christ serve its purpose in the world, put that chosen system of means far beyond the possibility of its being the fruit of human contrivance.

Taken all in all, the divine administration of this particular feature of Christ's Saviourship constitutes it a separate and independent evidence for the truth of Christianity.

XLV

“THE BODY OF HIS GLORY”

LET me propose a hypothetical case and draw from it a hypothetical conclusion for submission to the reader:

If the Bible, such as we have it, had never existed, and if out of all that it contains only the four “Gospels” so-called were extant to-day in our hands; if, besides, the history that has succeeded the events recorded (supposed truly recorded) in those four little books, could be quite banished from our minds, should we not, in the free exercise of our reason and of our historic imagination, feel warranted in saying, more or less consciously, something like this to ourselves:

The Life of which these Gospels give us an account cannot be imagined to stand a phenomenon unrelated to history going before it and to history coming after it. That Life must have been preceded by recognizable related historical antecedents; it must have been followed by recognizable historical consequences, momentous consequences, of some sort. If such a Life was indeed once lived among men, manifestly it was a special divine intervention in human affairs. Such a Life, we should feel, is too wide a divergence from the line of natural human progress, or, if you please, too bold a forward leap in advance along that line, to admit of being accounted for as simply a step taken in the course of ordinary and orderly evolution. A freak, a sport, it cannot rationally be supposed to have been.

Be it supposed a divine intervention, a unique, a supernatural, intrusion into the world of men and of events, due to an intelligent purpose on the part of a Being pre-

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siding over the universe, there must, we should be compelled to think, have been some previous announcement of such a Life, some prefigurement at least, capable of being understood, if not understood before, then certainly after, the fact. Ceasing now from the indulgence of philosophic mere speculation, and looking more narrowly into those four little books, which constitute the sole written original record of this extraordinary Life, we discover, embedded inseparably in the text, cited passages, with allusions, direct or indirect, which unmistakably imply the previous existence of Scriptures held sacred by those who possessed them, wherein are to be found precisely such anticipations, such prophetic foreshadowings, as our reason instinctively teaches us would have heralded, near or far-off, the advent from the world of the unseen of a Unique Man to appear one day in the world of the seen among men. So far the demand of our speculative reason is satisfied. The antecedents at least, required on the ground of prior probability, by the conditions of the case, are supplied.

But as to the sequel logically involved, to be unfolded in subsequent history, of the Life supposed? What historic consequences have, as matter of fact, followed that Life, followed it and been produced by it? In the first place, there followed it, within the space of a human generation, a body of literature commenting that Life, continuing it so to speak, illuminating it; in short, a body of literature such in general character as might have been rationally forecast from the intimations thrown out here and there in the Gospels, of copious private, not to say esoteric, instruction confided by the Personage who lived that Life to a group of chosen men set apart by him to be witnesses to their fellows, of their own age and of after ages, as to what they had seen and heard concerning the extra-mundane, suprahuman, Life manifested by eminence to them. Then, in the second place, many

centuries of historic development, on the whole progressive, though subject to many interruptions, some of them apparently regressive even—historic development foretold in various prophecy so true to fact that history looking backward could hardly now in brief tell it better.

In fine, we have, in the free exercise of reason, reason inspired no doubt and guided by our knowledge of the facts that exist, reconstructed that *Bible* which we began by supposing for the moment non-existent—the Old Testament, with its history, its legislation, its types, and its prophecy, and the New Testament with the Acts of the Apostles, and the cycle of the Epistles—and have besides found actual that long concatenation of succeeding historic events which was a postulate of our reason, inevitable, if the Life in question, alleged to have been lived, was indeed once lived among men.

That Life, then, with which in the present series of sketches we have been concerned, was not an isolated succession of events, without ancestry, without progeny, in human history. It was a divine intervention divinely prepared for, and having in it an entail of predetermined, foreordained, consequences necessarily involved. In other words, the intervention had a purpose. It was not a mere spectacular phenomenon adapted to excite wonder only, and not designed to produce important results. What was the divine purpose in this unique Life? It was of course a worthy, an adequate, purpose, a purpose, that is to say, commensurate in moment with the momentous Life in which it had its embodiment. The purpose was nothing less than the salvation of the world. It was summed up in that sublimest verse of Scripture—a verse as simple as it is sublime: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus Christ came to save a world that needed to be saved.

Quite irrespectively of discoverable divine purpose in the great event, the evidence, as has been seen, for the reality of the resurrection of Jesus is, fairly considered, so overwhelming that, even if it could not be shown to have had any conceivable human interest, it must still be admitted as an incontestable fact—incontestable, however historically, teleologically, unrelated. But it would be a very serious additional satisfaction to the inquiring and considering human mind, could it be made to appear that so stupendous, so overawing, an apparent exception to the uniformity of what we call "law" in the higher organic world, had some ascertainable justifying reason for its occurrence. Why did Jesus rise from the dead? Had his resurrection a perceivable relation to his undertaking as Saviour of the world? What was that perceivable relation? These questions may be said to ask themselves. They demand to be answered.

It is certain that Jesus himself regarded his own resurrection, while that event was still future, as possessing a capital importance beyond its personal importance to himself. Always in foretelling his death he insisted strongly, impressively, upon his imminent resurrection to follow. He made everything hinge upon it. He staked upon it his own trustworthiness and authority as prophet and teacher. If it did not occur, as he foretold that it would, he was hopelessly discredited. If it did occur, he was proved, inexpugnably proved, worthy of all confidence in whatsoever he taught, in whatsoever he might undertake to do. In Christ's resurrection we find so much at least of relation to his work as a Saviour of men. His resurrection was the indispensable condition of our confidence in him as a Saviour. And I submit that human ingenuity could not conceive any better way possible for Christ to take, in order to the effecting of this necessary result, the result namely of procuring human confidence in himself; I feel almost like venturing further and submitting that human ingenuity could not

invent any *other* way of effecting that indispensable result, than the one way adopted by him in his resurrection from the dead, occurring as it did in fulfilment of his own prediction and promise.

Result "indispensable," I mean, if Jesus were to become a Saviour of men, that is, were to accomplish what he himself announced as his mission in the world, namely, to seek and to save that which was lost. That Christ regarded the whole world as a "lost" world, is evident from the continuous tenor of his life and his teaching. He could not save, without inspiring trust; and he could not inspire trust, the supreme, the absolute, trust necessary, without rising from the dead—should he have submitted first to be put to death. He might perhaps, without this, inspire admiration, reverence, affection even, by dying nobly and beautifully as a martyr for the truth; but he could not thus inspire trust in himself as a Saviour, as one mighty, almighty, to save.

Christ's resurrection from the dead was necessary as *evidence*; and evidence it could not be, unless it were a literal, a physical, a visible, a verifiable, fact. True, Jesus could conceivably have left his human body to "see corruption" in the tomb of Joseph, and could have risen thence a disembodied spirit, to live figuratively thereafter in the world of men through the exertion of an immortal posthumous influence emanating from his teaching and his example. But such a resurrection—to miscall it by that name—would be incapable of being itself *proved*, and therefore would in turn be incapable of proving anything. The evidence necessary would in such a case still be wanting. You could revere the memory of a being who had by death forever disappeared from human knowledge, but you could not trust him as a living Saviour, able to save all that would come to God by him. And if you did not trust him, he could not be a Saviour to you.

But beyond being evidence that could not be dispensed with, the resurrection of Jesus was important as furnishing a needed *pattern*, subsisting in “ the body of his glory,” of what those saved by him would themselves experience in their own future resurrection from the dead. There needed, for the nurture and support of faith and hope and heavenly aspiration and realizing imagination, in the bosom of the redeemed believer—there needed for this end to be exhibited to qualified witnesses, for trustworthy report to future generations, as a kind of object-lesson, an *example* of one raised from the dead and entered upon what, for want of a better description, may be called the resurrection life; that is, the life to be lived, under other, unknown, unimaginable conditions, to all eternity by those who are finally accounted worthy to attain to that world and the resurrection from the dead. It would not do, that is, it would not answer the purpose of divine grace, to leave persons such as we are to believe barely this, namely, that there was a life after death to be enjoyed by us in a vague condition of existence, perhaps the condition of spirits, not only disembodied by dissolution, but destined to remain forever *unembodied* after experiencing the change which we call death. Paul gave voice to what is the natural, the instinctive, the irrepressible, cry of humanity when, apparently shuddering at the idea of being a spirit unclad, naked of body, he, in view of a nearing prospect of death, exclaimed, “ Not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon.” We need the hope of an *embodiment* for our life after death. In order to the nurture of that hope, the *pattern* of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his literal resurrection, was necessary.

But simply *an* embodiment would not satisfy our longing and our need. We instinctively desire *the* embodiment that was ours before death. “ No man ever

hated his own flesh," Paul says. Our bodies are not our selves, but they are part of our selves. A severed member of his body a man looks upon with a peculiar sentiment of regard, which he may shrink from acknowledging, but which nevertheless he cannot help feeling. This sentiment led a man of my own personal acquaintance who had suffered by amputation or by accident the loss of a hand or some important part of a hand, to bury (so he himself told me) that severed member in cemetery ground, with something of the same pathetic reverence as that due to the body of one deceased. At any rate, as Christ's resurrection body was the same body that was laid in Joseph's tomb, so our resurrection bodies are to be the same bodies that were ours when we lived and when we died.

The same, yet not the same. This paradox is a necessary part of the mystery of resurrection. Such it was for Christ; such it is to be for us. The sameness was necessary; but not less necessary is the difference. A changed body, somehow the same, yet different enough after resurrection to have a different name, and to be called now, instead of a "natural," a "spiritual" body—that is our demand, and that is the promise and the *pattern* contained for us in Christ's resurrection. The destined spiritual body of every redeemed believer will be one capable of transcending conditions of sense, and will possess refined attributes that could indeed be, imperfectly, exhibited in example, but that can never be otherwise than very indistinctly conceived by us, until we shall actually have ourselves attained to the resurrection of the dead. Paul no doubt had in mind the appearances in which the risen Jesus manifested himself to his disciples wearing that transfigured resurrection body of his, mysteriously at once the same as before and so different! when he wrote rapturously to the Philippians: "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion

anew the body of our humiliation conformed to the body of his glory—“ the body of his glory,” that is, the body belonging to, appropriate to, the state of glory to which Christ reascended after his resurrection.

In the same inspired and inspiring recollection of what the resurrection body of Jesus was, mingled with exulting anticipation of what the resurrection body of the believer would be, Paul wrote to the Corinthians that sublime poetic description of his which points the contrast between the present earthly, and the future heavenly, corporeal investiture of the spirits of the redeemed. The resurrection of Jesus supplied the necessary condition of such triumphant faith and hope as beat then in the heart of Paul, and beats now in the heart of many a believer, an irrepressible pulse of power, an inextinguishable presage of that victory within the soul which overcomes the world. Constituted as we are, and environed as we are, we needed a sensible pattern, such as the risen Jesus was, of our own predestined future—a pattern on which we might stay our confidence and from which we might form a somewhat definite image and ideal of our glorious hope.

If any reader of these pages has, without devoting serious consideration to the point, assumed too easily that a purely immaterial future existence, nowise embodied, would be a full satisfaction of his desire and his need, perhaps would even be in his view a more eligible form and condition of the life everlasting, let such a reader try to frame a conception of personality subsisting as insubstantial free spirit, and the vain effort to do this will soon convince him that *embodiment* of some sort is the absolute demand both of his reason and of his imagination, and is after all the craving of his heart. This is because we are finite creatures; and what is it to be finite but to be bounded, and our bounds prescribe to us the occupancy of a certain definite amount of space;

and to occupy a certain definite amount of space means to be embodied.

However studied, that is, studied from whatever point of view, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, precisely such as in every aspect it was, and such as it is represented to us in the Gospels and in the Epistles to have been, is adapted with perfect wisdom—wisdom perfect because divine—to constitute him, no less than to prove him, the Saviour needed by the world, and a Saviour able to save the world.

XLVI

THE ASCENSION

IT is a fact which probably escapes the notice of almost every reader of the New Testament that the ascension of Christ is neither described nor narrated by either Matthew or John; while by Mark it is given only in a conclusion to his Gospel which the majority of textual critics regard as an addition to the work furnished by some other hand than that of Mark himself. We are thus, in perfect strictness of criticism, limited to Luke in his Gospel, supplemented by Luke in his history, the Acts, for our information on this great event.

The forty days of Christ's earthly sojourn after his resurrection drew near their ending. The apostles were now in Jerusalem again, and the risen Jesus was with them imparting to them his farewell instructions. He bade them stay in the city awaiting that effusion of the Holy Spirit promised by God the Father, which should endue them with the power they needed for their appointed task of bearing witness for him to the world. At Pentecost the promised effusion of the Spirit occurred.

That last meeting of Jesus with his apostles is supposably the one referred to by Paul in those words of his, "then to all the apostles," closing his enumeration of the various appearances of the risen Lord. At length, as the moment approached for his final withdrawal from the world of sense, Jesus led his apostles out of the city to a point "over against Bethany," Mount Olivet, whence it was that he would accomplish his ascension to heaven.

Of this solemn and supremely happy event, Scripture affords us few descriptive details. Mark, in general the most realistically graphic of all the Evangelists, is here

remarkably frugal. Indeed, but for what is regarded by most textual authorities as not truly Mark's at all, namely, the last four or five verses of his Gospel, he, like Matthew and John, does not even mention the ascension. But the well-meaning author of this supplement to Mark's production contented himself with saying only this: "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Gleaning Luke, both from his Gospel, and from the Acts, we have these charming touches of detail:

"And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God" (Luke 24 : 50-53).

"And, being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is

taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey" (Acts 1 : 4-12).

There was then, it would appear, no continuously visible, gradual movement in ascension on the part of the Lord, a spectacular phenomenon which might be watched with wonder till height and distance removed him from view. The essential thing was that he disappeared. That he ascended was as it were incidental. No witnesses are represented to have followed with their eyes the person of the Lord going upward higher and higher, and growing constantly less and less, until it became a mere vanishing point, to be at last apparently absorbed into the sky. In short, there was no such visible ascension, to be made the subject of flamboyant description, as would naturally have been the product of myth-making human invention. The apostles, on that solemn last occasion, saw their Lord—and then—they did not see him. He had disappeared. "A cloud received him out of their sight." He was "taken up"—but in a manner that somehow eluded the eyes of the beholders. True, they stood looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, but the cloud enwrapped him and they really saw only that.

While thus straining their eyes heavenward in vain, they became aware of two strangers standing by them in white apparel, who brought them back from their rapture, their ecstasy, by saying: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." They beheld him going in a cloud that enveloped him from view. So, as Jesus himself declared, to the scandalizing of the high priest who sat in judgment upon him, "The Son of Man shall be seen coming on the clouds of

heaven." When? But there is no answer. That is one of the secrets of God which are not for us to know.

We have here still another example of the moderation, the sobriety, the self-restraint (or perhaps we ought to say, the *restraint*, insensibly imposed from without, from above), under which these remarkable New Testament historiographers wrote. Those angels—angels no doubt they were—are called simply "men," and there were only two of them. A whole legion of angels would be the natural conception for myth to have indulged itself in creating, to compose a fit convoy for the Lord of glory returning to heaven. "Two men stood by them in white apparel." That is all. Such simplicity, such sobriety, such brevity, constitute as it were a seal from God of the truth of the narrative.

Embodiment and disembodiment! Then embodiment again! Rather, embodiment and embodiment, insensibly flowing one into another! Appearance and disappearance! Let us not permit these marvels and mysteries to perplex us. Will it be an aid to faith, perhaps an aid to imagination rather, if an imperfect analogy be suggested? There exist, known to physicists, forms of force resident in what we call the material universe, which are capable, under proper conditions, of instantaneously reducing the most solid-seeming matter to a state such that, to human sense, it seems utterly to disappear, to be, so far as human observation can go, absolutely annihilated. Such transformation would, to be sure, be as a usual thing accompanied with sudden, momentary, violent *sound*. That accompaniment would, however, appear to be by no means a necessary incident of the effect produced. Conceivably at least, the disappearing of the matter in question might be as noiseless as it was utter, viewless, instantaneous.

Such are the known potentialities subsisting in the world of what we call matter. Matter indeed physicists now conceive of as being in the last analysis simply force.

And what in the last analysis is force but will? Will implies personality, and no personality but the supreme, the divine, would satisfy reason as the cause and the ground of the universe. If the Divine Person, whose will supplies that constant, invariable quantity of force by which the universe consists and persists, can work the marvel of transformation in matter indicated above, is it any stumbling-block to intelligent faith to have it proposed for believing and even for imagining, that he can at pleasure work the miracles of change in embodiment for his Son that are implied in the New Testament history concerning the risen Jesus? We are so tempted to "err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."

XLVII

“HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED?”

WITH the story of the Ascension, told in the chapter preceding this, the narrative of the earthly life of Jesus was ended; there remains nothing further to be told. As to every other ended human life, the last thing to be recorded is, He, or She, died and was buried. As to this life, it is far otherwise. Jesus, risen and ascended, speaks and says: “I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore.”

So much of posthumous human destiny depends upon the resurrection and the ascension to power and glory of Jesus Christ, that it is not easy to cease dwelling on this theme. There is no life after death provided and promised for men except as associated with a resurrection for them from the dead. “The hour is coming,” said Jesus, “in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice [the voice of the Son of Man] and shall come forth.” But, “*How* are the dead raised?” is a question that was asked in Paul’s time, and is asked still, many centuries since. Let us for a moment entertain the question and take it at its hardest; but let us at the same time make sure that we do not misunderstand the Scripture doctrine on the subject of the resurrection awaiting the dead.

If any Christian reader of these pages is stumbled at the thought of a true resurrection for bodies long dead, bodies reduced after death by the natural processes of decay to almost impalpable dust—dust often scattered far and wide, nay, reincorporated over and over again in other animate organisms—let such reader consider that

the resurrection promised and described in Scripture does not involve any such mechanical particle-for-particle identity, between the body buried and the body raised, as need create the least difficulty of either conception or belief. As has been with probability estimated, the human body undergoes ordinarily, while the subject is living, such changes and renovations that at the end of every seventh year it is an entirely new and in a certain sense a differing body, not a single atom remaining in it that was in it when that seven-year period began; and yet the body persists the same body, with every old particle in it exchanged for a new.

So the resurrection body may be the same body as that which Paul affectingly calls “the body of our humiliation,” meaning our earthly mortal body, while yet not containing one particle of what was laid in the grave after death. Theoretically, the growing wheat, root-let and blade, may contain a germ of the seed-grain out of which it sprang. But practically, no one, unless with a microscope, and perhaps hardly even so, could discern and identify that germ in the growing wheat. The resurrection body of the wheat is a body which the capacity, lodged mysteriously in the seed, to appropriate and assimilate nourishment, has created for itself out of the elements in soil and air that surround it. ‘Capacity to appropriate and assimilate nourishment’—perhaps there is no better definition of life than that. Capacity to take on fitting embodiment, that is, to assume to itself a new spiritual body, in place of the body of flesh laid aside at death—that indiscernible germ of personality and life is all that need persist from body to body in the process and mystery of the change at resurrection, in order to maintain the identity required by the representations of Scripture.

Faith is not only a condition of salvation, it is itself salvation, that is, an important part of salvation. So

also is hope. And Christ as Saviour provided in his resurrection from the dead—his real, his literal, his physical, resurrection—the means of keeping alive in us both faith and hope—faith and hope, I now mean, as to our own posthumous future; this by eminence in two important particulars:

In the first place, our bodies will be so transfigured from what they were in the days of our flesh, that every trace of imperfection in them will have vanished, everything in them that we would have different will have become different, because fashioned now after the body of our Saviour's glory. Then, in the second place, our bodies will still continue so much the same, notwithstanding their predestined transfiguration, as to encourage the anticipation that we may enjoy the privilege of recognizing our kindred and friends, and being in turn recognized by them, in that world beyond and above, that world of the perfect, to which we hasten and aspire. These two particulars are both of them by necessary implication contained in the resurrection of Christ considered as *pattern* of our own predestined resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus is thus seen to stand in close, in vital, relation to his undertaking as Saviour of men; a relation such, be it noted, as required the resurrection to be real, not figurative, a physical resurrection, not a resurrection by influence. Simply life after death for Jesus would not do; there must be embodiment after death, and embodiment demonstrably, nay, demonstratedly, the same as the embodiment before death, the same, though gloriously, mysteriously, different. To give up this is to give up the Saviourship of Jesus. When those mistaken students of Scripture who strangely misinterpret Christ's resurrection to mean his survival in spirit, or, more shadowy still, his survival by influence, and those skeptical critics of history who dismiss altogether the idea of any resurrection whatever for Christ—when, I say, these two classes of the "scientific" shall

have succeeded in thus volatilizing away the embodying substance which Joseph buried, and which somehow, in spite of every precaution, suddenly and utterly disappeared from its tomb, then may we say, with pathos exceeding the pathos of Mary, They have taken away our Saviour, and we know not where to look for another!

The recognition of the vital relation thus shown to exist between the resurrection of Jesus and his Saviourship, reenforces indefinitely what indeed should have needed no reenforcement, our conviction of the historicity and the reality of the great fact itself. That fact was not simply a stupendous phenomenon; it was as it were the climax, the supreme throe, of the divine effort to save the world. Note the tremendous energy of Paul's language to the Ephesians: "That ye may know," he says, "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." If by the death of his Son, we are reconciled to God, how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life, his resurrection life!

With Peter, and with those to whom Peter wrote, let us, also, in this generation, defy the "time-spirit" of unbelief, and suffer ourselves to be begotten anew to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

XLVIII

THE RESURRECTION AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH

THERE is a certain important bearing or aspect, not in general sufficiently considered, of the great subject of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which ought not to be lost sight of, and that is the light reflected by it backward upon the question of the virgin birth of our Lord. This latter question is one which may well be described as a "burning" question of the hour. Strange to confess, there is a strong, perhaps an increasing, tendency among students of Christianity, some of them professedly Christian students, to relegate the transcendently beautiful narratives given us by Matthew and by Luke (by these two Evangelists alone) of the birth of Jesus to the limbo of non-historical tradition and legend.

And true it is that there is not possible now any chain of evidences such as exists in regard to the resurrection of Christ, to prove the truth of the Gospel narratives of his miraculous birth. Necessarily, from the nature of the case, all depends upon the unsupported testimony of one woman, the mother Mary, whom cold historical criticism may easily assume to have been the victim of a pardonable hallucination, or even, less pardonably, to have had the motive to purge her fair fame, and her husband's, of polluting aspersion.

In application to this particular topic, the theory of myth is far more tenable than it is in application to perhaps any other feature of the Gospel history. The silence of Mark's Gospel and of John's, the silence of Paul, of Peter, of John, of James, maintained unbroken as to this point throughout their Epistles and through-

out their reported discourses, is used as an argument of force against the true historicity of the supernatural birth of Jesus.

The fact, however, is that the argument drawn from the silence of New Testament writings other than the two Gospels of Matthew and Luke is, when properly considered, of exactly no force whatever against the virgin birth of Jesus. A very little reflection should convince any intelligent and judicious man that there was every possible reason why, though the facts might be perfectly well known to the writers, such silence concerning them should be observed by those writers. The thing really surprising, if there is anything here really surprising, is that even Matthew and Luke should have given us their narratives. It is matter of gratitude that they did, for the world without them would be sensibly poorer. Why they did, it might be interesting, perhaps profitable, to inquire; but the silence of the other New Testament writings—why that?

In the first place, it may be said that the religious mythology familiar to the Greek world and the Roman world of the time abounded in tales of descended Olympian divinities becoming fathers by union with the daughters of men. The story of the virgin birth of Jesus would, in the pagan mind of that day, inevitably have been confounded with these libidinous myths; and thus, whether discarded by the skeptical as fabulous, or accepted by the credulous as true, that sacred story would have been mischievously misunderstood.

More probably, the heavenly tale of the mother Mary would have received at the hands of unbelievers, pagan and Jewish alike, the treatment proverbially paid to pearls cast before swine. It would have been made the subject of ribald ridicule and jeer. The mother Mary, while she still lived, would thus have been caused to suffer intimately, in the tenderest, most delicate, sensibilities of her womanhood and her motherhood. It is well

within the bounds of the possible, perhaps we might say of the probable, that Mark, when he wrote his Gospel, knew nothing of the matter, the reticence of Mary having up to that time kept her holy secret in strict privacy from the knowledge of men. It is noteworthy that neither in Matthew's Gospel nor in Luke's does the story of the miraculous birth appear as exerting any influence whatever on the succeeding parts of their narration; and nowhere in the New Testament, except in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, is there the slightest hint that Jesus Christ's way of entering into the world of men was once thought of by the writers as they wrote.

By the time Matthew's Gospel was written, the death of the mother Mary may have intervened, to take away the reasons before existing for silence on her account. The "beloved disciple," in whose house, after the crucifixion of her Son, Mary had found her home, may, during that lifelong guestship of hers with him, have become the sole depositary of her sacred secret, and at length have confided it to his fellow apostle Matthew, leaving it to his discretion to use it as he saw fit.

The attempt is sometimes made to show that Matthew wrote his Gospel (and Luke his) with an apologetic purpose, or with various apologetic purposes, in his mind. This idea does not, to my own critical literary sense, seem to accord with the simplicity of motive that the resulting narrative exhibits. All the Gospels, Matthew's included, bear to me the marks of having been produced with merely a view to preserve a record of things too precious to be forgotten, and to gratify the natural desire of converts to know all they could trustworthily be told of the earthly life of their Lord and Saviour. After Matthew had narrated in his Gospel what, as just suggested, he supposably had learned from John, it was not necessary for John to repeat it in his Gospel; not necessary, and moreover it would not have been ap-

appropriate, since the distinctive character of John's work was to be recognition, tacit or express, present and regnant throughout, of Christ's eternal preexistent state, in majestic transcendence of the incidents of his temporary incarnate condition. The later date of John's composition interposed time enough for him, looking backward perhaps half a century of years, to obtain, through that illuminating perspective, a truer measure of what Christ was, than had been possible to any other of the original apostles, all of them less gifted by nature than he with power of spiritual intuition, and probably less favored too with intimate confidential disclosures of truth from the lips of the living Master.

This striking difference of John's Gospel from the others in motive and method sufficiently accounts for his indisposition to dwell upon the incidents of the earthly advent of the Lord from heaven. The great thing to John was not how Christ came but that he came.

Similarly silent John's Gospel is about the ascension of Christ occurring after that series of his appearances subsequent to his resurrection. John observes exactly the same absolute reticence alike as to the manner of Christ's coming into the world and as to the manner of his going out of the world. His silence has only one significance, the same in both cases. It signifies his absorption in the idea of his Lord's divine transcendence. It throws no faintest shadow of discredit or doubt on his fellow Evangelists' narratives of the birth, more than on their accounts of the ascension.

That Luke as well as Matthew should report the circumstances of Christ's nativity, is most happily reassuring to the critical student of the Gospel history. Luke undertook his task in a spirit, and with the adoption of a method, that go near to anticipating the most approved modern canons of historical composition. No matter now who Luke was, or whether (as indeed is most likely)

he enjoyed the advantage of having the apostle Paul for adviser and guide, and still more no matter (for our present purpose) to what degree he may be supposed to have been divinely inspired—here is the Gospel that goes by his name, and that Gospel is self-evidently the work of an honest man of intelligence, perfectly conscious to himself (as Thucydides was when he wrote his immortal history) that he was setting about a very important task, and conscious moreover, as Thucydides was, of the necessity of sifting, selecting, “tracing,” and of depending upon “eye-witnesses,” and of thus arriving at “certainty.” Thucydides was obliged to confess that he found his “eye-witnesses” sometimes giving of the same occurrence conflicting reports, and perhaps Luke had a similar experience, although he does not say so. In the author of Luke’s Gospel at any rate we have a man who means to tell the truth, who has a good idea of method for arriving at truth to tell, a man who evidently writes from fresh information had as far as was possible at first hand, and who gives a result that attests itself as substantially trustworthy report of research conscientiously, painstakingly, and intelligently, conducted.

Luke’s Gospel, therefore, by its own unimpeachable internal evidence, proves to us beyond dispute that the narratives of the virgin birth were current among the Christians of his time and that he considered them well-supported by evidence. If, as is generally with great probability supposed, Luke wrote under the influence of Paul, we have in Luke’s Gospel what is tantamount to authentication from that apostle of the narratives in question. Indirectly thus Paul was *not* silent on this point; and as for the silence of his Epistles, there can be pointed out no place in these productions in which fitness required from him, or even admitted, allusion to the subject. But Paul did most majestically speak of Christ as “defined with power the

Son of God by his resurrection from the dead"; and that resurrection, unique as it was, throws back a very convincing light on the probability of an entrance for Christ into the human world equally unique. The reality of such a unique entrance was certainly believed in very early by Christians, and no amount of negative testimony from mere silence on the subject, observable here and there in Scripture, should make us doubt that it was early believed in on good grounds. The resurrection raises an argument from antecedent probability in favor of the supernatural birth that there is nothing to oppose except the assumption, antiscientific, that what is supernatural is impossible.

It may be added that John certainly did not, in writing his history, ignore the alleged facts of Christ's nativity because he thought them wonderful to the degree of incredible; for a far more wonderful and incredible thing constitutes the very prologue to his Gospel, namely, the assertion of the absolute deity of Christ. And that a preexistent Being, a Being preexistent as divine, should enter the world of men in some other than the merely ordinary, normal, way of human birth, is a thing antecedently so probable that, to one who believes in that preexistence, it is in effect certain. In the light of John's Gospel, silent though that Gospel is about them, the New Testament stories of the birth of Jesus may be said to be their own sufficient vouchers, may be held to attest themselves incontrovertibly as true.

The resurrection and the preexistence of Christ join thus in proclaiming, with one voice, inferentially indeed but convincingly, his supernatural, his unique, nativity.

XLIX

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

EVEN at the risk of seeming to obtrude unbecomingly a human personality where the image of the divine Son of Man should be left to occupy the field of view alone, I am constrained to take lingering farewell of my engrossing theme with a suggested, profoundly earnest, personal testimony.

I have been a student of literature my whole life long ; it seems to me hardly an exaggeration to say this in the most literal meaning of the words, for, under the tuition and stimulation of both my father and my mother, I began to study literature in my early childhood. Most of my life I have studied it in connection with trying to produce it. During a large part of this time, I have studied it by teaching it and by teaching the art of literary production.

I have studied literature comparatively, both ancient literature and modern, this in several different languages, making my study both extensive and intensive. I have thus acquired some faculty to know literature truly, so to speak intuitively, at sight. But no other literature in the world have I studied so deeply, so intimately, as I have studied the literature of the New Testament. I speak now of this literature strictly as literature, and what I wish to testify concerning it is this, that I know of no other literature that equals it in the uniform maintenance of what I have come to regard as the prime quality, the one indispensable quality, of high literature, namely, genuineness. I have exercised my ear to be very sensitive in this regard, and I can truly say that if ever I have met with so much as one false note in the

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New Testament, one note that errs from being soundly, sincerely, genuine, that is, from reflecting truly the manifest inner thought, feeling, purpose, of the writer or speaker, then I have forgotten the place where the erring note occurs.

What I have thus testified as to the New Testament in general, holds true as to the historical parts of it in particular, namely, the four Gospels and the Acts. It would be extravagant to say that the virtue of uniform genuineness in these historical writings furnishes absolute proof of their trustworthiness as history. But the convincing effect of them is thereby indefinitely enhanced. I have felt this afresh in studying afresh the four Gospels for the purpose of producing this work; and it has been a very great satisfaction of the mind to feel so confident as throughout I have been able to feel, that I was all the time dealing with true history.

This is part of the testimony that I have been constrained to bear in taking leave of the delightful task which has engaged me so long; but it is far from being the principal part of the testimony that it was in my heart to bear. Up to the present point, my testimony has been to the literature of the Gospels considered simply and only as literature. There remains something for me to say concerning the Gospel history considered no longer as literature, but now considered strictly as history. In my study of it, conducted from this point of view, I have been extraordinarily impressed with its self-attesting fidelity to fact, in short, with its self-evidencing absolute trustworthiness and truth.

Discrepancies, real, or merely apparent, contradictions seemingly impossible of reconciliation, I have encountered here and there; but these encounters, instead of shaking my confidence in the history, have served only to increase my confidence. So much has this been the case, that I have felt no temptation to labor at a harmony of

my varying informations. Such variation from one to another of witnesses testifying with regard to the self-same fact was to have been expected. Total absence of it would have been reason for suspicion. The variation has always been with respect to some minor detail, and never with respect to the main fact concerned, or with respect to any really vital minor fact affecting that main fact. The encounter of these conflicts, real or apparent, has in no instance caused me the least momentary perturbation of the mind. It is not in the nature of things, not in the nature of the human mind, that the case should be other than that which it actually is.'

I am far from pretending to be an adept in the philosophy of history, least of all in the philosophy of such a history as that of a divine incarnation, and so of a divine-human life embodied in a concrete example, set in course of development and exhibition before our eyes amid the conditions of an ordinary society of men—far enough from any presumptuous pretension like that, am I; still, I have now and again, as it were involuntarily and inevitably, during my late study of the Gospel history, bethought myself to consider deliberately questions like these: Given the problem of a Being at once divine and human, to be entered into the life of mankind and to become a factor in human history; let this suprahuman Being have come into the world to save the world at cost of humiliation and self-sacrifice inconceivably great—then, wherein and how would the practical solution of such a problem, the realization of the idea of it, be likely to be found? Would it not be found in a life full of things not to have been expected, of paradoxes in speech and in action, in short, in a life precisely such as is the life lived by Jesus Christ, and portrayed for us in the Gospels?

As often as I have been led to entertain this problem in thought, I have invariably returned to one and the same conclusion and rested in it: 'Yes, the key to all

the paradoxes, whether of word or of deed, that Jesus presents, the key, the master-key, is the paradox that he *was*—the Word become flesh, God incarnate, the Son of God, the Son of Man. That one supreme divine Paradox, the impossible made possible, resolves all contradictions, unlocks all mysteries, answers all demands of my reason, dissipates for me all doubts.'

Such, very imperfectly set forth, has been the satisfaction of the mind that I have found in the Gospel records of the life of Jesus Christ, and in the Gospel presentation of his transcendent personality, whether regarded simply as literature or regarded simply as history. But so much of testimony borne leaves far the greatest part of my debt still undischarged. The spirit in a man is more than his mind, is a yet finer element of personality in him.

And the blessing experienced by my spirit within me, how can I tell the story of that? How, without improper, almost indecorous, exposure of the innermost of my personal being, can I describe the intimate penetration of my inmost soul with the supramundane, the heavenly, atmosphere felt by me pervading the books that I studied? I dare not speak—I wish I dared!—of *effect* produced; but I can, and I will, speak of influence exerted. I feel that words are futile, while at the same time I must multiply words to give only a hint of a meaning that I can in no wise express. The influence was indescribably illuminating, elevating, purifying, sanctifying, beatifying. If I underwent no transformation of character, it was not for lack of potent influence tending in that direction.

In truth, my new reading and study of the Gospels, more intensive than any one of many previous readings, threw a most revelatory light of interpretation upon that glorious verse of Paul's, "We all, with unveiled face, beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are

transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Although it would not be genuine for me to say that my experience matched the apostle's exultant language, still it is quite true that, beholding, in the mirror of the Gospel presentations, the express image of my divine Lord and Redeemer therein faultlessly portrayed, I did feel some upward and onward reach of the spirit within me toward transformation into that heavenly likeness. The Lord Jesus just before he was betrayed prayed for his chosen: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." May it not be simple, humble, childlike faith, and not unchastened presumption, for me to trust that that prayer of my Saviour was in course of fulfilment with me?

Every reader must feel, but no reader can feel it so profoundly as I do, that my effort here at expression is in great part a vain effort; but let me trust that my Lord will accept it as a sincere, however ineffectual, attempt at bearing something like an adequate personal testimony to what my own late experience in the study of it has led me to recognize and feel to be the transcendent, the unique, quality of the Gospel literature.

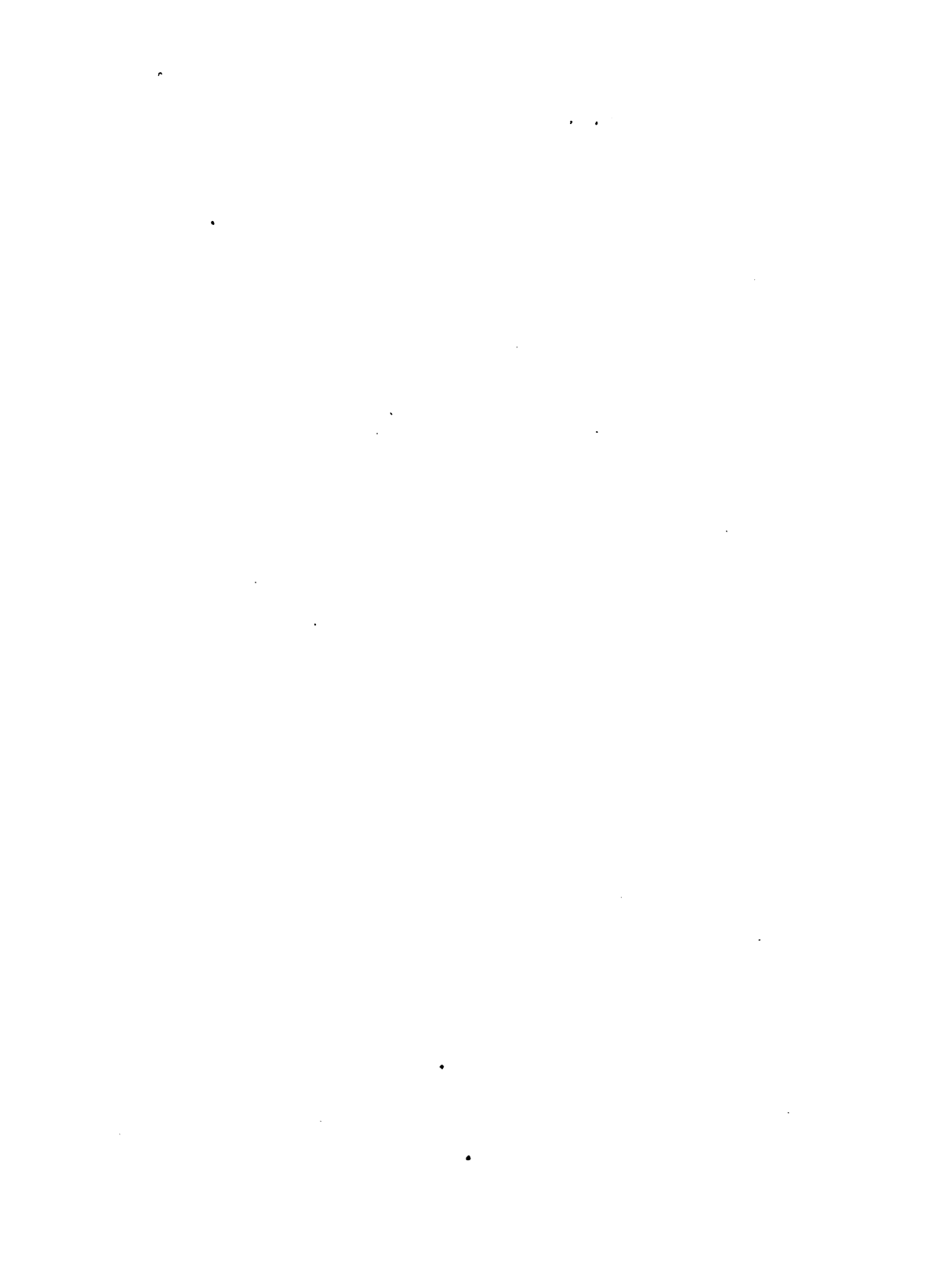
Rapidly rereading now, first, the history itself, and then this personal testimony to the history, I find that I have made a very important omission. I have omitted to take account of the matchless inalienable beauty and charm inherent in the things themselves which the charming and beautiful history relates. What I now have in mind is something quite independent of the art, conscious or unconscious, the uniform genuineness, the self-evidencing trustworthiness, which characterize the history. I mean the course of the incidents and events, the portraiture of character and personality, the dramatic situations, the records of word and deed, which engage the historian's pen: in short, I mean the story of the

Gospels irrespective of the way in which the story is told. The story in itself is such that no imaginable wrong way of telling it would quite wholly extinguish its life and its charm. It is indestructibly charming. Arid hostile criticism may do its best, that is, its worst, to prove that Jesus Christ in fact never even existed, that the Gospels about him are of myth and legend all compact; still those Gospels will go on living their invulnerable life, and will forever attract and fascinate mankind simply by virtue of the ineffable loveliness of the story that they tell.

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